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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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SENSEX JUMPS 666 PTS TO RECORD HIGH

MUMBAI, 26 SEPT

Benchmark Sensex rallied 666 points to close at a fresh record high on Thursday following buying in auto and banking shares amid gains in global markets. The BSE Sensex jumped 666.25 points or 0.78 per cent to settle at a record high of 85,836.12 amid monthly expiry in the derivatives segment. As many as 28 Sensex stocks advanced and two declined. During the day, it reached a record intra-day peak of 85,930.43, surging 760.56 points or 0.89 per cent. The benchmark is just 69.57 points away from the 86,000-peak. *—PTI*

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MUDA scam: Govt says won't let 'biased' CBI probe cases

Move comes amid BJP's demand for CBI probe into the scam

BENGALURU, 26 SEPT

Amid the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) land allotment row, the Karnataka government on Thursday withdrew general consent given to CBI to investigate cases in the State as it alleged that the agency was "biased".

Announcing the decision after a cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil said "it is clear that the CBI or the Central government while using their instrumentalities are not using them judiciously".

The move comes amid demands by the opposition BJP to hand over the MUDA site allotment case to CBI.

Patil rejected suggestions that there was any connection between revoking the CBI's permission to operate in the state and the allegations of illegalities in MUDA's allotment of 14 sites to Siddaramaiah's wife.

Karnataka is the latest state to join the list of non-BJP-ruled states to have withdrawn the general consent to the CBI. Other states include West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

The decision came a day after a Special Court here on Wednesday ordered a Lokayukta police probe against Siddaramaiah in the MUDA case, setting the stage for registering an FIR against him. The order of the Special Court Judge, Santhosh Gajanan Bhat, followed a single-judge bench of the High Court upholding the sanction granted by Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot to conduct an investigation against Siddaramaiah on the allegations of illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife BM Parvathi by MUDA. State BJP President BY Vijayendra said on Wednesday: " Court might have asked Lokayukta police to probe, but we urge the CM -- before he resigns -- that he should order the investigation to be handed over to independent agency CBI, for free and impartial probe." *—PTI*

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Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah during the launch of KWIN City ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

CABINET DECISION

Karnataka rejects Kasturirangan report on WB Ghats

BENGALURU, 26 SEPT

The Karnataka Cabinet on Thursday decided to stick to its decision to completely reject the Dr K Kasturirangan report on Western Ghats.

"Regarding the Central government's draft notification of the Western Ghats eco-sensitive area (ESA), based on the report by Dr K Kasturirangan-led high-level working group, the Cabinet held a detailed discussion. Already a decision has been taken by Karnataka to completely reject Dr Kasturirangan report, we have decided to continue with that decision," Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H K Patil told reporters.

At a consultation organised by the Forest Department recently, public representatives from across party lines from the region had opposed the sixth draft notification of the Western Ghats eco-sensitive area (ESA).

The Union Environment Ministry has issued six draft notifications since March 2014 to declare over 56,825.7 sq km of the Western Ghats across Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu as eco-sensitive. However, the final notification is still pending due to objections from the states.

Overall, the notification proposes to declare 449 square kilometres in Gujarat, 17,340 sq km in Maharashtra, 1,461 sq km in Goa, 20,668 square kilometres in Karnataka, 6,914 sq km in Tamil Nadu and 9,993.7 sq km in Kerala as ecologically sensitive.

The Western Ghats, extending for about 1,500 km parallel to the southwest coast, is the most prominent orographic feature of the Indian Peninsula. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Govt extends AFSPA in parts of Nagaland, AP

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, (AFSPA) under which an area is declared as "disturbed" for the convenience of security forces, has been extended in eight districts in Nagaland, three districts in Arunachal Pradesh and some other areas for six more months after a review of the law-and-order situation in the two northeastern states. An area or district is notified as a disturbed area under the AFSPA to facilitate the operations of the armed forces. *—PTI*

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Hindu temple in US vandalised with graffiti

WASHINGTON, 26 SEPT

Unknown miscreants have vandalised the BAPS Hindu temple in California's Sacramento, desecrating it with expletive-laden graffiti saying "Hindus go back!", the BAPS Public Affairs said. "Less than 10 days after the desecration of the @BAPS Mandir in New York, our Mandir in the Sacramento, CA area was desecrated last night with anti-Hindu hate: "Hindus go back!" We stand united against hate with prayers for peace," BAPS Public Affairs, non-political organisation said on X. *—PTI*

PMLA: Balaji walks free after 15 months

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

In a relief to former Tamil Nadu minister and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) strongman Senthil Balaji, the Supreme Court on Thursday granted him bail in a money laundering case after over 15 months.

The top court said Balaji, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), has been in jail since last year and his continued detention will amount to an infringement of his fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Noting that there are more than 2,000 accused and over 600 witnesses in the case, a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih said inordinate delay in the conclusion of the trial and the higher threshold for the grant of bail cannot go together.

The top court said stringent provisions regarding the grant of bail in Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) cannot become a tool which can be used to incarcerate the accused without trial for an unreasonably long time. It directed Balaji to furnish bail bonds in the sum of Rs 25 lakh with two sureties in the like amount.

The bench directed that Balaji shall not directly or indirectly attempt to contact or communicate with the prosecution witnesses and victims of the three scheduled offences in any manner.

—PTI

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Raut gets 15-day jail in defamation case

MUMBAI, 26 SEPT

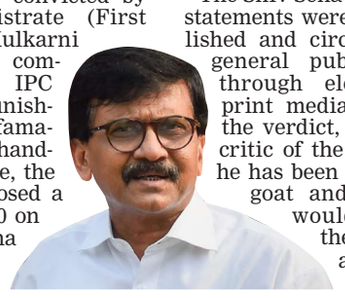
A Magistrate's court in Mumbai on Thursday sentenced Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut to 15-day simple imprisonment after convicting him in a defamation case filed by Maharashtra BJP leader Kirit Somaiya's wife Medha more than two years ago.

However, the court later suspended the sentence for 30 days and granted him bail.

Raut, 62, was convicted by Judicial Magistrate (First Class) Aarti Kulkarni for an offence committed under IPC section 500 (punishment for defamation). Besides handing jail sentence, the court also imposed a fine of Rs 25,000 on the Rajya Sabha MP.

Medha Somaiya, in a complaint filed through advocate Vivekanand Gupta, in 2022 claimed Raut had made baseless and defamatory allegations against her and husband in the media, accusing them of being involved in a Rs 100-crore "scam" related to the construction and maintenance of public toilets under the jurisdiction of the Mira-Bhayander Municipal Corporation on Mumbai's outskirts.

The Shiv Sena (UBT) leader's statements were printed, published and circulated to the general public at large through electronic and print media. Reacting to the verdict, Raut, a bitter critic of the BJP, claimed he has been made a scapegoat and asserted he would challenge the judgment in a higher court. *—PTI*



WOMAN CLAIMS MUNIRATHNA RAPED HER IN VIDHANA SOUDHA

BENGALURU, 26 SEPT

The woman who filed a case against BJP MLA N Munirathna Naidu in the complaint alleges she was allegedly raped in Vidhan Soudha and inside his car provided by the government. Munirathna, MLA from City's RR Nagar, who was in judicial custody following his arrest in a rape and honey-trap case, is being probed by SIT. As the allegations surfaced, Congress leaders performed a purification ritual at the gates of Vikasa Soudha. The complaint, lodged by a woman activist at the Kaggalipura Police Station, further accuses Munirathna of taking her to a godown he owns in Mutyalanagara, where she was allegedly raped. According to the complaint, the act was recorded, and Munirathna used the video to blackmail her. *—Salar News*

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46 drown while taking holy dip in 15 Bihar districts

PHOTO: PTI

PATNA, 26 SEPT

Altogether 46 people, including 37 children, drowned and three others went missing while taking holy dips in rivers and ponds in separate incidents during the 'Jivitputrika' festival in Bihar, the State government said on Thursday.

The incidents occurred in 15 districts of the state during the festival held on Wednesday, they said. During the 'Jivitputrika' festival, women fast for the well-being of their children and both take holy dips.

"A total of 43 bodies have been recovered so far. Further search operation is on," a statement issued by the Disaster Management Department (DMD) said.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced an ex gratia of Rs 4 lakh for the next of kin of the deceased. The process of providing the compensation has begun, and family members of eight deceased have already received it, an official statement said. The incidents of drowning were reported from East and West Champaran, Nalanda, Aurangabad, Kaimur, Buxar, Siwan, Rohtas, Saran, Patna, Vaishali, Muzaffarpur, Samastipur, Gopalganj and Arwal districts. *—PTI*

India urges citizens to leave Lebanon amid war

JERUSALEM, 26 SEPT

The Indian Embassy in Beirut has urged its nationals to avoid travel to Lebanon due to escalating violence and "strongly advised" those present there to exercise extreme caution and leave the country as soon as possible.

"Those who remain for any reason are advised to exercise extreme caution, restrict their movements, and remain in contact with the Embassy of India in Beirut through our email ID: cons.beirut@mea.gov.in or the emergency phone number +96176860128," the embassy said.

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said that 2,00,000 people have been displaced in Lebanon since Israel's attack nearly a year ago. Israel intensified its assault on Lebanon with Hezbollah's television station reporting an airstrike in a suburb of Beirut. The Israeli military said it killed Hezbollah Drone Commander in the airstrike. *—PTI*

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BENGALURU'S TWIN

CM launches ambitious 5K acre KWIN City, 45 km from B'luru airport

BENGALURU, 26 SEPT

The Karnataka government launched the first phase of ambitious 5,800-acre the Knowledge, Wellbeing and Innovation City (KWIN City) project aimed at promoting innovation, sustainability, and economic growth on Thursday. The project is touted as first of its kind in the country.

It will be located between Doddaballapura and Dobbaspet, 45km from Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport. The KWIN City has proximity through major transport networks, including National Highways 44 and 648, 64 kms from Doddaballapura and the Bengaluru-Pune Greenfield Expressway (300 km).

Speaking at the inauguration, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah described the project as a bold vision for the future, saying it would be a game-changer. He said, "KWIN City will be divided into four key districts: Knowledge, Health, Innovation, and Research. The city, designed to accommodate five lakh residents, will have a 465-acre solar farm capable of generating 0.69 million megawatt-hour (mwh), meeting all of its energy needs which will create an ecosystem driving economic growth, attracting global talent, and fostering groundbreaking advancements."

Siddaramaiah assured that the KWIN City would be self-sufficient, harnessing 50 per cent of its water requirements through advanced rainwater harvesting systems. An additional 20 percent of the water will be supplied by borewells, ensuring a sustainable supply. Elaborating on the City's academic goals, Minister for Large and Medium Industries, MB Patil stated that KWIN City aims to attract the top 500 foreign educational institutions by leveraging UGC regulations. Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi rejected proposal for a GIFT City.Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) is a planned business district in Gujarat, established in 2007. It has created over 50,000 direct and indirect jobs. *—Salar News*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah during the launch of KWIN city at Banquet hall in Bengaluru on Thursday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT KWIN CITY

The project aims to create a parallel city to Bengaluru for equal growth and opportunities in all sectors

Area: 5,800 acres

Location: Between Doddaballapura and Dobbaspet

₹40,800 cr Investment

Jobs to be created: Over 5 lakh

Expected residents: Over 5 lakh

Knowledge District

- Home to 50 universities, 230 engineering colleges, and 1,700 ITIs
- Expected to host around 500 international schools and colleges.

Health District

- Focused on life sciences, aiming to establish KWIN City as a major healthcare hub in Asia.
- Will include major hospitals and medical institutions.

Innovation District

- Designed for emerging industries like biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, and aerospace.
- Will support sectors like Life Sciences, Future Mobility, Semiconductors, Advanced Materials, Aerospace, Defence, and Space Technology.

Research District

- Focused on biopharmaceutical and scientific research.
- Will feature advanced technology for clinical trial centres and research labs.

CN Ashwath Narayan, MLA, leader of Opposition R Ashoka and other BJP lawmakers and leaders were detained during their protest against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over MUDA land case, at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Thursday **PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD**

CM stays defiant as BJP pushes for resignation

BJP members protest in Vidhana Soudha

BENGALURU, 26 SEPT

Opposition BJP in Karnataka on Thursday staged a protest here demanding Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's resignation after a Special Court ordered a Lokayukta police probe against him in a site allotment case.

Holding placards and shouting slogans, party lawmakers and leaders took part in the protest, led by Leaders of Opposition in Legislative Assembly and Council, R Ashoka and Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, respectively, in front of the Mahatma Gandhi statue at Vidhana Soudha here.

"Two court orders have come against Siddaramaiah. When we first protested inside and outside the Assembly, they (CM and Congress) termed it as politically motivated and when the Governor order came they said it was at the behest of the BJP-led government at the Centre. Now the High Court and Special Court have given orders, they have found truth in allegations and said it needs to be investigated," Ashoka said.

BJP protests in front of the Mahatma Gandhi statue at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Thursday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Ashoka said, "Despite this, Congress is playing a drama calling it politically motivated....We are not saying the government should go, if not him (Siddaramaiah as CM), someone else. We want a fair probe, and government property should be protected."

On Congress leader and former speaker KB Koliwad suggesting that Siddaramaiah should resign, Ashoka said there is similar demand from several leaders within the ruling party. *—PTI*

'LEGAL EXPERTS CONSULTED ON FILING APPEAL'

BENGALURU, 26 SEPT

Consultations are on with senior counsel and experts on filing an appeal in the wake of court orders upholding Governor's sanction for investigation against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in MUDA site allotment case and ordering of a Lokayukta police probe against him, a key legal advisor said on Thursday.

"We have been saying since the beginning, let there be any inquiry or investigation, we have no objection to it. But, certain lapses that have happened legally, it needs to be rectified, it is our duty," Congress MLA, senior advocate and the CM's legal advisor AS Ponnanna said here. "We will try to seek our advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi's advice," he said. *—PTI*

Nobody staked claimed for CM's post: DKS

BENGALURU, 26 SEPT

Deputy Chief Minister and State Congress Chief DK Shivakumar on Thursday said no party leader has staked claim for the post of Chief Minister in the backdrop of Siddaramaiah facing a Lokayukta probe in the case.

Terming the charges against him a "BJP conspiracy", Siddaramaiah said he would wage a legal fight.

"Did the Prime Minister (Narendra Modi as the then Gujarat CM) resign in the Godhra incident as FIR was done (then)? (HD) Kumaraswamy (JDS leader) is in Narendra Modi's government, he is on bail, has he given resignation?" the Chief Minister asked. "Have they given resignation? Are they not embarrassed?"

Deputy Chief Minister and State Congress President DK Shivakumar also ruled out the possibility of Siddaramaiah stepping down.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar during the launch of KWIN city, in Bengaluru on Thursday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Shivakumar said: "I'm saying the proposal for the Chief Minister to resign won't come. This is a political conspiracy by BJP and JD(S). They are unable to digest the benefits of our five guarantee schemes reaching people."

About reports of some leaders staking claim for the CM post, Shivakumar said: "When myself being a deputy CM is not claiming, where is the point of others?" *—PTI*

Identify beneficiaries misusing amenities: MUDA Chief to officials

Chairman of Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) K Marigowda directed officials to identify beneficiaries misusing civic amenities (CA) sites for unauthorised purposes. He asked them to inspect their respective zones and compile a list of such beneficiaries, as well as identifying vacant CA sites that are not benefiting the public. Marigowda said numerous complaints have been received on this. *—Salar News*

Lokayukta seeks clarification to register case

Lokayukta police are seeking 'legal clarification' to register an FIR against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in MUDA case. "We have not yet registered a case. Some legal clarification is being sought, as special court has passed the order under Criminal Procedure Code while it should have perhaps passed the order following procedure under Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Samhita," a source in Lokayukta police said. One of the petitioners in the case, Snehamayi Krishna, based on whose petition the court directed Lokayukta police to book a case against Siddaramaiah, expressed concern on Thursday as no case was registered. He alleged that the Lokayukta police were not obeying the court order *—PTI*

Cong to file case against JD(S) over obstructing Lokayukta duty

Congress will file a case against JD(S) activists for allegedly obstructing the duties of Lokayukta SP TJ Udesh in Mysuru. On Wednesday, JD(S) activists and MUDA petitioner BS Pradeep Kumar protested against Lokayukta for not issuing acknowledgement for the complaints filed by Kumar against CM Siddaramaiah. KPCC's M Lakshman said complaints should be filed based on the order of Special Court. *—Salar News*

3 students die as bike collides with stationary tractor

CHIKKABALLAPUR, 26 SEPT

Three students died in a motorcycle accident on the outskirts of Chikkaballapur on Wednesday evening. The incident occurred around 7pm near Gerehalli village when their bike collided with a stationary tractor. The victims have been identified as Nithish Gowda, 19, Nithin, 18, and Vaibhav, 16, all residents of Avalagurki. They were returning home after attending tuition classes in Chikkaballapur when the accident took place. Reports indicate that the tractor was parked on the road due to a breakdown when the motorcycle struck it. Nithish and Nithin were students at BGS Junior College, while Vaibhav attended Good Shepherd School in Chikkaballapur. *—Salar News*

NIA arrests suspected ULFA militant in City

BENGALURU, 26 SEPT

National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday arrested a suspected militant having links with the banned United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) on the outskirts of Bengaluru. Girish Bora was residing with his family in Jigani Industrial Area near Anekal. Acting on a tip-off about Bora, an NIA team which had come from Assam conducted a raid and arrested him. Bora had planted Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) at various locations in Guwahati, and later he had left the city, sources said. Girish Bora had shifted his family to Bengaluru and settled here. Disguising his actual identity, Bora joined a private company as a security guard. He also managed to generate fake documents, and assumed a new identity as Gowtham, sources said. NIA will soon present Bora at a local court and will take him to Assam. *—Agencies*

Fed up with her: Murder accused

BENGALURU, 26 SEPT

An Odisha native who allegedly chopped a woman into 59 pieces and stored body parts in a fridge in Bengaluru wrote in his purported suicide note that he killed her as he was fed up with her conduct.

The suicide note written by Mukti Ranjan Ray, 30, in his diary was a confessional statement which read: "I have killed my lover Mahalakshmi on 3 September. I fought with her over personal matters and Mahalakshmi assaulted me. Enraged by her act, I killed her," Shantanu Kumar Jena, Station House Officer at Dhusuri police station in Odisha told Salar News.

Ray was found hanging from a tree in his village in Bhadrak district in Odisha on Wednesday.

The parents of the accused were not aware of the murder and are now in a state of shock, according to Odisha police. Kunjalata Ray, mother of Mukthi, said her son was trapped by Mahalakshmi. "She kept asking for money from him. I asked him why he didn't flee from there (Bengaluru) and resign from his job. He did this out of fear, as the woman kept demanding money from him."

Ray arrived in Pandi village on Wednesday and spent some time with his family. He later left on his father's scooter and committed suicide by hanging from a tree and was found by locals, Jena said.

—Salar News

BLOOMING GREEN WARRIOR

State government felicitated Saalumarada Thimmakka on her 113th birthday, in Bengaluru on Thursday. The environmentalist has planted more than 10,000 trees in the State **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Resume live streaming: Lawyers' group to HC

BENGALURU, 26 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

Five Year Law Course Advocates Association has urged Karnataka High Court to continue live streaming of judicial proceedings, citing the benefits of transparency and public accountability. This comes after Karnataka High Court on Tuesday suspended live streaming, raising concerns of misuse after controversial remarks of a judge went viral on social media.

In a letter to the Chief Justice of High Court on Thursday, association president S Umesh said: "Live streaming allows citizens to witness court proceedings first-hand, promoting openness and trust in the administration of justice. The practice holds legal professionals accountable for their actions, with the public keeping a watchful eye on proceedings."

The association proposed that instead of stopping live streaming, measures should be put in place to address any concerns regarding sensitive or controversial statements during hearings. "We suggest providing guidelines for judges and advocates on responsible communication during live-streamed hearings," the association said.

—Salar News

UNDER BBMP

Civil workers push for permanent employment

BENGALURU, 26 SEPT

Karnataka State Municipal Corporation and Civil Workers Association called on the State government on Thursday to abolish the contract labour system and grant permanent employment to sanitation workers, particularly those employed in Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP).

The association said that the government in 2018 had agreed to transition 24,500 workers to direct wage payments, yet many sanitation workers in Hubballi, Dharwad, Belagavi, and Kalaburagi remain in a precarious position.

BM Suresh Babu, President of the Civil Workers Association, expressed his frustration over the lack of progress. "We have been waiting for years. Despite multiple promises, the permanent list for BBMP workers is still not fully released," he told Salar News. "BBMP is yet to finalise the list of 14,980 workers eligible for permanent status. This affects sanitation workers, including garbage lorry drivers, auto drivers, and cleaners, who diligently work to keep the City clean."

PHOTO: PTI

Sudhakar S, a garbage lorry driver told Salar News, "Working as a driver on a contract basis has proven to be a real problem. Without permanent status, we miss out on benefits such as pensions, insurance, and proper healthcare for our families, which is a significant worry."

Lalitha P, another BBMP sanitation worker, echoed these sentiments, saying, "Without job security, we do not know if we will have work next month. Contracts can be terminated unexpectedly, leaving us to struggle with our expenses."

The association has also called for the permanent status of sanitation staff in the State's drainage boards and emphasised that workers approaching retirement age (60) should receive their dues, with job opportunities extended to their next of kin.

—Salar News

Traffic curbs on Uttarahalli

BENGALURU, 26 SEPT

Traffic restrictions have been imposed on Uttarahalli Road as BWSSB is installing drinking water pipelines of 1,900mm diameter as part of Cauvery Phase 5 project to supply water to 110 villages.

The restrictions will be in effect from 27 September to 27 October. The road between BGS Junction and Madhu Petrol Station Junction (East to West) will be temporarily closed to all types of vehicles. Commuters are advised to take alternative routes during this period.

For vehicles travelling from BGS Junction towards Madhu Petrol Station, the suggested route is to take a right turn at BGS Junction, head towards Mookambika Circle, and proceed via Vrushabhavathi Mori Bridge to enter Mysore Road. Vehicles coming from Mysore Road towards Uttarahalli should take a right turn at Mylasandra Village, travel through the village's back gate, and continue towards BGS Junction. *—Salar News*

BBMP TO REVIEW MUNIRATHNA'S PROJECTS

BENGALURU, 26 SEPT

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) set up a five-member committee to investigate allegations of irregularities in paying a Rs 500 crore bill for works carried out in Rajarajeshwari Nagar Assembly constituency. This comes after BJP MLA Munirathna, who represents Rajarajeshwari Nagar constituency, was arrested by Kaggalipura police on 14 September as he faces three criminal cases.

BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath said complaints were received regarding illegalities in releasing bills for works between 18 September, 2020, and 19 July, 2022. The committee comprises BBMP Special Commissioner of Revenue Munish Moudgil, Special Commissioner of Planning and Finance, Chief Engineer of Quality Assurance and Quality Control, Technical Vigilance Cell under Commissioner Chief Engineer & Executive Engineer.

—Salar News

DON'T BE LIKE POLITICAL PARTY, GADKARI TELLS IRC

BENGALURU, 26 SEPT

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said the Indian Road Congress (IRC), a 90-year-old organisation that gives guidance when it comes to technical aspects of infrastructure building of our country, may be a knowledge engine, but it is functioning like a political party.

Gadkari was addressing a special plenary session, 'Advances in Bridge Management' at the international seminar of the Indian Road Congress.

The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways said if IRC is interested, he will facilitate land and a grant. "But you should be an independent, impartial and fair organisation. I am confident all state governments, including Karnataka, will also contribute towards this," he added. Gadkari said if quality work is to be done, then it is very important to be independent of the government framework. *—PTI*

Omar blames Centre for low voter turnout in J&K

SRINAGAR, 26 SEPT

National Conference leader Omar Abdullah on Thursday said the low voter turnout in Srinagar district during the second phase of voting for Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls was perhaps a people's reaction to the Centre trying to project normalcy in the Union territory. His remarks came after the second phase of polling on Wednesday saw a voter turnout of over 56 per cent while the first phase held on 18 September saw an estimated 61.38 per cent voter turnout. The former chief minister, who is a candidate from Ganderbal and Budgam segments, also said it was a mistake to invite the foreign diplomats to observe the polling in Kashmir.A delegation of diplomats from 16 countries, including the US, Norway and Singapore, on Wednesday observed the Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir.—*PTI*

Kejriwal gets seat No. 41 in Assembly next to Sisodia

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

He once had the 'number one' chair. On Thursday, AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal was allotted seat number 41 in the Delhi Assembly, many paces away from the Chief Minister's chair. While his successor Atishi got the Chief Minister's 'one' seat, trusted lieutenant Manish Sisodia was given a spot next to Kejriwal, at seat 40. After taking charge, Atishi had kept the chair used by her predecessor Kejriwal empty at the Chief Minister's Office, a move BJP and Congress said was a "grave insult" to the post. Days after coming out of Tihar on bail in the excise policy case, Kejriwal resigned as chief minister, saying he would return to the post after getting a "certificate of honesty" from the people of Delhi in the Assembly polls due in February. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Ex MLA, senior Congress leader KP Kunhikannan dies

KANNUR, 26 SEPT

Former MLA and senior Congress leader KP Kunhikannan died at a private hospital on Thursday, party sources said. Kunhikannan, 76, had been receiving treatment at the hospital after sustaining injuries in a road accident on September 4. The car in which Kunhikannan was travelling collided with a divider while he was returning home after attending a meeting in Kanhangad. He was initially treated at a hospital in Kanhangad. A close associate of late Congress stalwart K Karunakaran, Kunhikannan was elected to the 8th Kerala Legislative Assembly from the Uduma constituency in Kasaragod district during the 1987 elections. —*PTI*

Ex-BJP MLA says hurt those mixing urine in food

MUZAFFARNAGAR, 26 SEPT

Former BJP MLA Vikram Saini, known for his provocative remarks, has courted controversy by advocating violence against people accused of spitting or urinating in food, by passing police. "Their hands and legs should be broken and they should be put in jail because they are corrupting the faith," Saini said when asked about recent incidents where shopkeepers were allegedly seen spitting over rotis. Earlier this month, police arrested two men in Ghaziabad for allegedly mixing urine in fruit juice. Saini welcomed Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister's decision to mandate the display of shop owners' names, aiming to deter similar incidents. Saini was disqualified from his MLA seat last year due to a conviction related to the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots case. —*PTI*

Cong's max time goes into infighting: Modi

Modi says Cong failed as Oppn in past 10 years

CHANDIGARH, 26 SEPT

The Congress spends most of its time infighting and every child in Haryana is aware of it, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday while asserting the people have decided to give one more chance to the BJP to serve the state.

Interacting with Haryana BJP workers through the NaMo app, he discussed fieldwork at the booth level for the upcoming state polls and encouraged them to devise a strategy for the party to win the election.

While allegingthe Congress has failed as an Opposition in the past 10 years, Modi claimed the grand old party's maximum time goes into infighting and taking on each other.

Every child in Haryana is aware of the grand old party's internal strife, Modi said.

Attacking Congress, he said, "The entire basis of those

PHOTO: PTI

fighting against us in the polls is lies. They repeatedly tell lies, their talks have no head and tail and they vitiate the atmosphere."

"The party remained far from people's issues for 10 years... such people can never win the trust of the people of Haryana," he said.

Recalling that he had served in Haryana in the past as a BJP worker, Modi said, "It is my full belief that the people of Haryana have decided to give one more chance to the BJP to serve." "They are happy that in 10 years a government has been run without corruption. This has happened in Haryana for the first time.

"Youth have got jobs without "parchi and kharchi" (jobs for cash). Therefore, the people of Haryana are with us, their blessings are with us and victory is certain," he said. Recalling that he worked extensively for party organisation in Haryana in the 1990s, Modi told the BJP workers that it was his fortune that he got the opportunity to work in the state for a long period and it was also a learning time for him. —*PTI*

Modi systematically ended jobs: RaGa

RaGa says BJP destroyed H'yana, divided people

CHANDIGARH, 26 SEPT

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday over the unemployment issue and accused him of "systematically" ending the employment system of the country.

Addressing a poll rally in Assandh, he exuded confidence that Congress would sweep the 5 October Haryana Assembly election. Attacking BJP, Rahul said it has "destroyed" Haryana and also accused BJP of dividing the people and pitting them against each other..

The former Congress chief referred to his recent visit to the US and said he met some youths from Haryana who went there in search of a better future as

PHOTO: PTI

they were unable to get employment opportunities in their state. Rahul said he found that 15 to 20 Haryana youths were staying in one room in Dallas, Texas.

Rahul said he asked them how they reached America and came to know about their ordeal of travelling through countries such as Kazakhstan and Turkey as well as South American nations and the jungles of Panama, to reach the US. Rahul said he was told by one of the youths that it required at least Rs 35 lakh to reach the US which they either borrowed at an exorbitant rate of interest or got it by selling their farmland. "They have seen our people die on their way and they could not spent 50 lakh to start their business because there is no guarantee of profit," he said. One of them even tried and he failed, he said and accused the BJP of "killing" small businesses with a GST regime. Some 10-15 people want to sell Chinese products in India, he alleged. Rahul alleged that the BJP government tried to snatch from farmers whatever they had with the "black" farm laws. Rahul said he had received complaints from Jammu that the apple business had been hit. "In Himachal, the apple business goes to Adani," he alleged while raising the issue of farmers not getting the right price. —*PTI*

Female grapplers pin hope on Phogat

JIND/SONIPAT, 26 SEPT

Several young female wrestlers in Haryana, especially those rethinking their career paths in the wake of accusations of sexual misconduct against the former WFI chief BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, are rooting for Vinesh Phogat to become the sports minister in the hope that it would facilitate their return to the akhadas.

The wrestling arenas or akhadas were once abuzz with activity with young girls and boys training with a common goal—medals at big events followed by government jobs.

However, things changed after the January 2023 protests by top wrestlers demanding the resignation of Singh for allegedly harassing junior women wrestlers.

- The akhadas have since witnessed a spurt in dropouts among the young female grapplers.

The akhadas have since witnessed a spurt in dropouts among the young female grapplers.

"I did not come here for five months after the protests began as my parents didn't allow me to continue training," said a young woman wrestler. "We hope that when Vinesh Phogat gets elected, she is made the sports minister because she understands the challenges that women wrestlers face," she told PTI. —*PTI*

Vinesh Phogat joined Congress after returning from the Olympic Games where she was disqualified the wrestling final PHOTO: PTI

FOR BURIAL

Badlapur accused's kin seek protection

THANE, 26 SEPT

Family members of Akshay Shinde, the Badlapur sexual assault case accused who was killed in an alleged shoot-out with police earlier this week, on Thursday demanded security for his last rites.

Amar Shinde, his uncle, told mediapersons that they were yet to decide where the body should be buried.

Police protection should be provided for the last rites, and also to Akshay's parents and his lawyer as there was a threat to their lives, he said.

Akshay had expressed desire that he would like to be buried instead of being cremated, his lawyer told PTI.

On Wednesday, his father had informed High Court that the family was ready to take possession of his son's body but could not find a burial site. Akshay, 24, was arrested last month for allegedly sexually assaulting two kindergarten girls in Badlapur. He was being taken to Badlapur for probe in another case on Monday evening when the alleged shootout occurred inside the police van, resulting in his death. —*PTI*

Stalin hails Senthil's 'sacrifice'

CHENNAI, 26 SEPT

Hours after the Supreme Court granted bail to former Tamil Nadu minister V Sentil Balaji in a money laundering case, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin said attempts were made to break the DMK leader's resolve by keeping him behind bars but that he has emerged stronger than ever before.

PHOTO: PTI

Stalin said his "dear brother" got the relief after 471 days. "The prison life did not extend for so many days even during the Emergency. The political conspiracies continued for 15 months (against Balaji). " Stalin said in a post on 'X.' BJP leader Tamilisai Soundararajan said Balaji has only been granted bail and has not been acquitted. She said it was surprising that the parties in the INDIA bloc were celebrating his bail. —*PTI*

SC rejects Gujarat's plea seeking review of Bilkis case

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed a plea filed by the Gujarat government seeking a review of the Court's verdict which contained certain observations against the State while quashing the remission granted to 11 men convicted of raping Bilkis Bano and murdering seven of her family members during the 2002 riots.

A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan also rejected the application for listing review petition in open court.

The Gujarat government in its plea had said the Apex Court's observation in the 8 January judgment, holding the State guilty of "usurpation of power" and "abuse of discretion" for complying with an order of another Top Court bench, was an "error apparent on the face of the record" primarily on three grounds. PTI

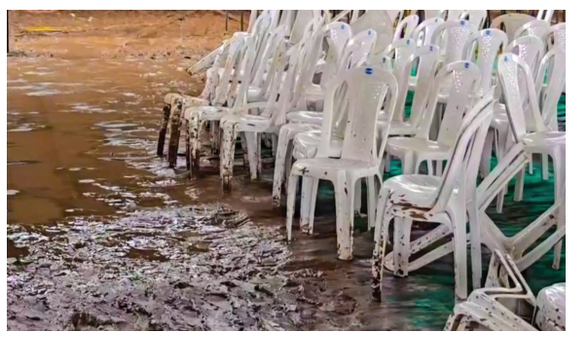
In its 8 January verdict, the apex court had quashed the remission granted to the 11 men convicted in the case and ordered that they be sent back to jail within two weeks. —*PTI*

SC RESERVES VERDICT AGAINST MLA A RAJA

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its judgement on a plea filed by CPI(M) leader A Raja challenging the order of the Kerala High Court which set aside his election from Devikulam Assembly seat in Idukki district.

Congress leader D Kumar, who was the runner-up in the 2021 Assembly polls, has alleged that Raja was not qualified to contest the Devikulam seat reserved for the Scheduled Caste (SC) community.—*PTI*



Mud and waterlogging at the SP College grounds after heavy rains, where PM Narendra Modi was scheduled to address a rally, in Pune, on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

Modi opened same metro stn 5 times: Sule

MUMBAI, 26 SEPT

NCP (SP) leader Supriya Sule on Thursday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi should inaugurate the new phase of Pune Metro online as he has inaugurated the "same" project five times in the past.

Modi's visit to Pune on Thursday was cancelled owing to heavy rains.

"It is very unfortunate that we have missed Modi's visit. It is Maharashtra's culture to welcome a guest. I want to bring it to the PMO's notice that it would be the sixth time the same Pune Metro project would have been inaugurated," she said.

"So I request the PM to inaugurate Pune Metro online...it is the same project he had inaugurated five times in the past...it will help the people of the Pune city and the inauguration must not wait for the next visit of the PM," Sule added.

Modi had visited Pune in the past to inaugurate different phases of the project. —*PTI*

Fadnavis blames Ajit for LS poll loss?

MUMBAI, 26 SEPT

BJP's reverses in Maharashtra in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls were due to poor vote transfer from the Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said on Thursday.

The BJP's "core voter base" did not like the alliance with the NCP, though "80 per cent" are now convinced about the need for such "political compromises", he added.

PHOTO: PTI

The ruling alliance, which comprises the BJP, NCP and Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, managed to win just 17 of the 48 Lok Sabha seats in the State. BJP won nine seats, down from 23 in the 2019 edition.

"It is true that this is the BJP's worst performance in the last few general elections. We contested 28 seats but still got very less seats. However, we lost 12 seats by less than 3 per cent votes, which is a margin of 3000-6000 votes. One must remember we received the highest number of votes in this (2024 Lok Sabha) election," he said at the India Today Conclave here. —*PTI*

HP does a U-turn on display of owners' names at eateries

SHIMLA, 26 SEPT

Facing flak over Minister Vikramaditya Singh's announcement on mandatory display of names by street vendors, the Himachal Pradesh government on Thursday said no such decision has been taken.

Singh on Wednesday told media that it would be mandatory for street vendors, especially those selling food items, to display their identity cards at their shops.

The decision, he had said, was taken on the lines of the one taken by the Uttar Pradesh government.

Last week, Himachal Pradesh Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania constituted a seven-member committee headed by Industries Minister Harshwardhan Chauhan for the framing of a policy for 'Street Vendors,' according to a statement.

The decision to register outside workers with their identity came following massive protests weeks ago for the demolition of alleged unauthorised portions of a mosque in Sanjauli.

—*PTI*

TIRUPATI LADDU ROW

Offer fruits not sweets: UP temples tell visitors

PRAYAGRAJ, 26 SEPT

Temple authorities in Uttar Pradesh have banned devotees from bringing sweets and other processed items for offerings and instead urged them to bring coconut, fruits and dry fruits, amid outrage over 'adulterated' laddus offered at the Tirupati Temple in Andhra Pradesh.

Several prominent temples in the Sangam city, including Alop Shankari Devi, Bade Hanuman, and Mankameshwar, have announced these restrictions.

Shiv Murat Mishra, the chief priest of the famous Lalita Devi temple of Prayagraj, said, "In the meeting of our temple management held on Tuesday, it was decided that prasad of

A local religious body in Mathura has decided to distribute 'ancient Prasadam' made of fruits in temples PHOTO: PTI

sweets will not be offered to the goddess in the temple, but devotees have been requested to offer coconut, fruits, dry fruits, cardamom etc."

Yamuna Puri Maharaj, chief patron of the Alop Shankari Devi Temple and secretary of Shri Panchayati Akhara Mahanirvani, said devotees have been banned from bringing sweets and prasad from outside.

Mahant Shridharanand Brahmachari Ji Maharaj of the Mankameshwar temple located on the Yamuna bank said, "After the Tirupati controversy, we have banned bringing prasad from outside to Mankameshwar temple. We have written a letter to the district magistrate to get the 'laddu-peda' available in the shops outside the temple tested."

The row over Tirupati laddus erupted after Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu claimed that substandard ingredients and animal fat were used in their preparation during the previous YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government. The YSRCP, in turn, has accused Naidu of indulging in "heinous allegations" for political gains. A local religious body in Mathura decided to distribute "ancient Prasadam" made of fruits, flowers, panchmeva, cardamom seeds, and sugar candy in temples, instead of market-made sweets —*PTI*

Macron bats for India's permanent UNSC seat

NEW YORK, 26 SEPT

French President Emmanuel Macron has supported India's bid for permanent membership in a reformed United Nations Security Council, while advocating the expansion of the powerful UN body.

"We have a Security Council that is blocked...Let's make the UN more efficient. We have to make it more representative," Macron said at the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Wednesday.

India has been at the forefront of efforts at the UN to push for urgent long-pending reform of the Security Council, emphasising that it rightly deserves a place at the UN high table as a permanent member. India argues that the

PHOTO: PTI

15-nation council founded in 1945 is not fit for purpose in the 21st Century and does not reflect contemporary geo-political realities. Macron's remarks came days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address to the 'Summit of the Future' on Sunday emphasised that for global peace and development, reforms in institutions are essential, underlining that reform is the key to relevance. —*ANI*

HC extends interim protection from arrest for Khedkar

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

The Delhi High Court on Thursday extended till 4 October, the interim protection from arrest granted to former IAS probationer Puja Khedkar in the criminal case lodged against her for alleged cheating and wrongly availing OBC and disability quota benefits in civil services examination. Justice Chandra Dhari Singh deferred hearing on her plea seeking anticipatory bail after a request was made by her lawyer. Counsel for the Delhi Police urged the court to allow a short adjournment, saying a "larger conspiracy has come to light", which involves forgery and creation of documents. "At request of counsel for the petitioner, list on 4 October. Interim order to continue," Singh said. Khedkar is accused of allegedly misrepresenting information in her application for UPSC Exam.—*PTI*

Man gets death penalty for raping 21 kids in hostel

ITANAGR, 26 SEPT

A special POCSO court in Yupia in Arunachal Pradesh on Thursday sentenced a man to death for sexually assaulting 21 children, including 15 girls, at a residential school.

The court of special judge (POCSO), west session division, Yupia also sentenced two others to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment each for their involvement in the case. The prime accused, Yumken Bagra, was the warden of the hostel at Karo Government Residential School in Shi-Yomi district, where he sexually assaulted the children between 2019 and 2022.—*PTI*

Goods train derails near Bokaro; 15 trains diverted

RANCHI, 26 SEPT

Two wagons of a goods train derailed near Tupkadih station in Jharkhand's Bokaro affecting movement of trains, an official said on Thursday. Fifteen trains have been diverted on the route, the official said. "Two wagons of a goods trains carrying steel consignment derailed near Tupkadih station in Bokaro district last night at about 9pm. We have diverted 15 trains including 14 express trains," Sumit Narula, Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), Adra division of South Eastern Railway, told PTI. The goods train was carrying steel consignment from Bokaro Steel Plant and overturned on the main line between Tupkadih and Bokaro stations. The incident occurred near the northern cabin yard of Tupkadih station and affected train movement on the Bokaro-Gomo section."One of the impacted lines has been rectified while work is underway to restore the other line to ensure smooth traffic, Narula said.—*PTI*

PHOTO: LINKEDIN

'Beer Biceps' YouTube channel gets hacked

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

Famous Ranveer Allahabadia's YouTube channel 'Beer Biceps' has got hacked and was renamed to 'Tesla' by hackers on Wednesday. The hackers also changed the handle to '@Elon.trump.tesla_live2024' deleting the his recent interviews. The content was replaced by older events featuring interviews with Elon Musk and Donald Trump. and Musk promoting cryptocurrency scams (AI-generated). Taking to X, Ranveer said he was travelling to Singapore when the incident happened. He posted a picture of a burger with caption "Celebrating my two main channels being hacked with my favourite food, vegan burgers. Death of Beer Biceps met with Death of diet." —*Agencies*

AFSPA extended in Nagaland, Arunachal

It applies to 8 'disturbed' Nagaland dists, 3 in AP

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

AFSPA was removed in 70% of northeastern states **PHOTO: PTI**

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, (AFSPA) under which an area is declared as "disturbed" for the convenience of security forces, has been extended in eight districts in Nagaland, three districts in Arunachal Pradesh and some other areas for six more months after a review of the law-and-order situation in the two northeastern states.

The districts in Nagaland where the AFSPA was reimposed are Dimapur, Niuland, Chumoukedima, Mon, Kiphire, Noklak, Phek and Peren.

The areas in Nagaland falling within the jurisdiction of Khuzama, Kohima North, Kohima South, Zubza and Kezocha police stations in Kohima District; Mangkolemba, Mokokchung-I, Longtho, Tuli, Longchem and Anaki 'C' police stations in Mokokchung District; Yanglok police station in Longleng District are also declared 'disturbed'.

In addition, Bhandari, Champang and Ralan police stations in Wokha District; and Ghatashi, Pughoboto, Satakha, Suruhuto, Zunheboto and Aghunato police stations in Zunheboto District of Nagaland are also declared 'disturbed' under the AFSPA.

In a separate notification, the Home Ministry said under the AFSPA, the central government had declared Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts in Arunachal Pradesh and the areas falling within the jurisdiction of Namsai, Mahadevpur and Chowkham police stations in Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh, bordering Assam as 'disturbed area' with effect from 1 April.

A further review of the law-and-order situation in Arunachal Pradesh has been undertaken, it said. "Now, therefore, Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts in Arunachal Pradesh and the areas falling within the jurisdiction of Namsai, Mahadevpur and Chowkham police stations in Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh, bordering the state of Assam, are declared as 'disturbed area' under Section 3 of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 for a period of six months with effect from 1 October, unless withdrawn earlier," the notification said.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah had said the AFSPA has been removed in 70 per cent areas in the northeastern states even though it is in force in Jammu and Kashmir. Shah had also said that the central government would consider revoking AFSPA in Jammu and Kashmir. —*PTI*

RAIN HITS STATES

Clockwise from top: Heavy rains in Shri Badrinath Dham in Chamoli district, Uttarakhand on Thursday thus raising water levels of Ganga River; Students walk amid heavy rains in Kolkata, West Bengal; Waterlogging in renowned Konark Sun Temple in Odisha cause inconvenience to tourists **PHOTOS: PTI**

Mumbai woman drowns in drain, 4 states flooded

MUMBAI, SHIMLA/ DEHRADUN/ BHUBANESWAR, 26 SEPT

Mumbai civic body have advised people in the city and surrounding areas to stay indoors after heavy rainfalls battered the city **PHOTO: X**

A 45-year-old woman drowned in a drain overflowing due to heavy rains in suburban Andheri, Maharashtra on Wednesday, police said.

Vehicular and rail traffic in Mumbai resumed on Thursday, a day after heavy rains battered the city, inundating low-lying areas, halting local trains in their tracks and forcing the diversion of at least 14 incoming flights. Local trains, considered the lifeline of Mumbai, were running normally though some services were slightly delayed, as per officials. The Mumbai civic body and police have advised people in the city and surrounding areas to stay indoors as much as possible.

Himachal Pradesh

A person died due to a cloudburst triggered by heavy rain in Himachal Pradesh's Sirmaur district as 26 roads, including a national highway, were closed due to bad weather in the district.

Heavy rains lashed several parts of the state closing around 50 roads since Wednesday evening taking the total number of roads closed in the state to 71.

Uttarakhand

Heavy rain lashed several parts of Uttarakhand early on Thursday, raising water levels of several rivers, including the Dharma Ganga whose waters damaged the reconstruction work being carried out along its banks. The flash flood cut off a number of villages and killed a mother-daughter pair in Toli village.

Odisha

With heavy rain lashing Odisha due to a low pressure in the Bay of Bengal, the Puri district administration on Thursday announced the closure of all schools within its jurisdiction for the safety of students. Visitors to Konark Sun Temple near Puri were encountering difficulties due to flooding.

West Bengal

Heavy rain partially affected normal life in West Bengal. Fairly widespread rain is likely over many places during the next three days. —*PTI*

Manipur govt takes U-turn, says armed grp attacks unlikely

Security forces seized a cache of arms and ammo in Manipur **PHOTO: ANI**

IMPHAL, 26 SEPT

Days after claiming that 900 Kuki militants were planning to attack peripheral villages of Imphal valley districts around 28 September, the Manipur government retracted its statement and asserted that the likelihood of "any such misadventures by armed groups is minimal and unsubstantiated".

In a joint statement, Security Advisor Kuldiep Singh and DGP Rajiv Singh on Wednesday said, "In view of recent reactions from different communities regarding the input on the infiltration of 900 trained Kuki militants from Myanmar to carry out attacks on Meiteis on 28 September, it is clarified that the input was verified from various sources but could not be substantiated on the ground. There is no current basis to believe in any such input."

Shiva temple set on fire in Manipur

Miscreants attempted to set a temple on fire in Manipur's Senapati district early Wednesday morning. The act caught on CCTV showed a burning piece of wood being thrown towards the temple courtyard. —*Agencies*

Security forces seized a cache of arms and ammunition during search operations in Manipur's Thoubal district, a police statement said.Assam Rifles and Manipur Police in a joint operation on Wednesday in Tekcham Maning Ching area seized one 7.62mm SLR along with empty magazine, two SMG carbine along with magazines, one .32 pistol and 9mm pistol along with an empty magazine, the statement said. —*PTI*

Kangana's 'Emergency' will release with some cuts

MUMBAI, 26 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) on Thursday told the Bombay High Court that a certificate would be issued to Kangana Ranuat's film 'Emergency' if certain cuts are made, as recommended by its revising committee.

The biographical drama is caught up in controversy after some Sikh organisations including the Shiromani Akali Dal objected, accusing it of misrepresenting the community and getting historical facts wrong.

CBFC suggested that the producers should "remove all visuals and dialogue where Sikhs are shown shooting at non-Sardars in front of a bus. CBFC's counsel Abhinav Chandrachud told the court that the board's revising committee has taken its decision. Further hearing on the matter will be heard on 30 September. —*PTI*

MURMU IN SIACHEN

President Droupadi Murmu (centre) poses with Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Retd) BD Mishra and soldiers during her visit to Siachen Base Camp, in Leh, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

Jhumpa rejects award in protest of kaffiyeh ban

NEW YORK, 26 SEPT

Pulitzer Prize-winning Indian-origin writer Jhumpa Lahiri has declined to accept an award from the Noguchi Museum in Queens in protest after it fired three employees who had worn kaffiyehs in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza.

The New-York based museum, founded nearly 40 years ago by Noguchi, a Japanese American designer and sculptor, announced last month that employees during their working hours could not wear clothing or accessories expressing "political messages, slogans or symbols". —*PTI*

AMID RG KAR CASE

Durga puja panel bats for women's safety

KOLKATA, 26 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

A section of crowd-puller Durga puja organisers in Kolkata are making a few changes to their original theme, planned months ago, to incorporate the issue of women's safety amid protests over the RG Kar hospital incident.

While one organiser has planned to show three-dimensional images of public protests, another would spread the message of protecting oneself through life-saving techniques.

A third puja will have a huge banner near the marquee demanding justice for the doctor who was allegedly raped and killed in the state-run hospital on August 9, sparking large-scale protests by medics, celebrities and common people. These features were added to the original themes of the pujas.

Every year, several puja organisers in West Bengal choose themes, mainly social issues and current incidents, and use their pandals, idols and lighting arrangements to depict them.

"In a slightly changed plan, our spherical pandal will be a symbol of protest against injustices to women. In lighting arrangements, a large flame can be seen along with three-dimensional images of protests," said Sajal Ghosh, general secretary of Santosh Mitra Square Puja in central Kolkata. Shibmandir Puja Committee in south Kolkata's Bhawanipur area will have the tagline 'Suraksha na Atmaraksha' (security or self-defence) along with the original theme 'Bratya' (ostracisation) to spread the message of protecting oneself through life saving techniques. —*PTI*

Docs write to Chief Secy on unfulfilled vows

Five days after partially resuming duties at government-run hospitals in West Bengal following a 42-day 'cease work,' junior doctors sent an email to Chief Secretary Manoj Pant reminding him of their unmet demands. They demanded formation of a central inquiry committee to address the alleged "threat culture".

High alert in Odisha dist amid jackal scare

BERHAMPUR, 26 SEPT

Polasara area in Odisha's Ganjam district is on high alert after more than 20 people in three villages were injured after they were attacked by jackals over the last two days, officials said on Thursday.

Most of the injured, including several elderly people and women, from Hatiotta, Jemadeipur Shasan, and Chandramadeipur villages received treatment at the community health centre (CHC) in Polasara, they added.

One victim from Hatiota recounted that a jackal attacked him while he was walking to a pond early on Wednesday morning. He said two persons accompanying him were also attacked by the animal. The jackal later fled to the neighbouring village of Jemadeipentha after being chased away by residents, he said. Panic has gripped the local community, with many villagers fearing to go outside alone. —*PTI*

5-year-old dies in Udaipur leopard attack

Jaipur, 26 Sept

A five-year-old girl was mauled to death by a leopard in Rajasthan's Udaipur district, police said on Thursday. It happened in Majavad area of Gogunda town. This is the fourth incident of leopard attack in the area within 10 days. —*PTI*

STIR AGAINST GAS SUFFOCATION

Death penalty opponents protest outside Alabama Capitol in US, seeking cancellation of the execution of Alan Miller in what would be the nation's second nitrogen gas execution. Miller, 59, was convicted of capital murder in 1999 shooting spree. He was set to die by lethal injection in 2022, but it was called off. In the coming week, US is going to execute 5 more people, which will be the most in decades ***PHOTO: PTI***

Why Gurugram crawls? Voters ask ahead of polls

CAMPAIGNING INTENSIFIES

Intense waterlogging, damaged roads and serpentine traffic jams are the everyday woes faced by the people and they are now demanding assurance from candidates that their grievances be addressed ***PHOTO: PTI***

The campaign for upcoming Assembly polls in Haryana has seen parties making varied promises but voters in Gurugram have a common grievance -- why does the traffic in the millennium city crawl?

Pitched as the "Singapore of India", the most elite region of NCR, Gurugram is one of Asia's largest IT and corporate hubs. The city might be offering employment to people from across the country who now call it home, but when it comes to civic amenities, life is getting increasingly difficult, voters say.

Intense waterlogging, damaged roads and serpentine traffic jams are the everyday woes faced by the people and they are now demanding assurance from candidates that their grievances will finally be addressed.

Posters of "No road, no vote", "Abki bar, no guddha sarkar", "Stuck in traffic, can't vote", and "Why Gurgaon crawls" are flashed by voters when the candidates go out in the city to seek votes.

"The city is in a mess but the traffic situation is worse. The only solution left is to never step out of the house. Even a few kilometres of distance takes over an hour and travelling to Delhi is like taking a flight to Dubai or Singapore," Sumegh Jaiswal, a resident of a multi-storey complex in Sector 82, told PTI.

Jaiswal's fellow residents protested with posters when candidates of both the BJP and the Congress visited the area this week.

"We are asking all candidates what is their plan to address the traffic issue. We don't need promises, we need a plan and then only we will vote," he said.

The city which is in proximity to Delhi airport also has residences of several VIPs. Swanky apartments, the cost of which runs into several crores of rupees, mark the entry of the cyber city from Delhi.

"Sometimes it takes less time in flight than it takes to reach the airport from Gurugram. There is no metro connectivity to the airport and going by road is a nightmare.

"And if it rains, God save us because it is like literally rowing a boat. Why should we vote for any party if nobody is bothered about these basics," said Trikha, an architect.

The traffic situation has also become a subject of blame game among political parties.

Ruling BJP's Rao Narbir Singh, a three-time Haryana minister who is contesting from Bashahdpur constituency which constitutes 70 per cent of Gurguram's electorate, admitted that the city is a "civic mess". "I agree Gurgaon (old name of Gurugram) is a civic mess currently. We have the worst waterlogging, the worst roads and a traffic crisis. The city has turned into a garbage dump. The last five years not just brought the city to a standstill but reversed the pace of development," he told PTI in an interview.

The BJP and Dushyant Chautala-led Jannayak Janata Party formed an alliance in October 2019 which broke up in March 2024.

"I blame the coalition for it (the Gurugram's civic problems). We had a majority government from 2014 to 2019 and anybody can question the pace of development but things have gone downhill since 2019. It was our coalition with the JJP which is to be blamed.

"The civic infrastructure department was with the JJP and they didn't do anything. The people are disappointed that despite the BJP being at the helm of affairs, no work has been done," Singh said.

Congress' Vardhan Yadav who is contesting his debut election from the constituency accused the BJP of neglecting Gurugram.

"There are two national highways passing through the city and still the traffic on main roads as well as interior roads is unbelievable.

"Despite contributing a hefty sum to Haryana's coffers, Gurgaon has been given a short shrift and that is what needs to change. The situation wasn't like this till Congress was at the helm in the state," he said.

Traffic authorities blame the increasing number of vehicles in the city. "Every month at least 5000 new private cars get registered in Gurugram, besides this there are two-wheelers and commercial vehicles.

Gurugram district has four assembly constituencies -- Gurgaon, Pataudi, Badhshahpur and Sohna -- with a total electorate of over 15 lakh. Badhshapur is the largest constituency in the state in terms of electorate.

The Haryana Assembly polls are slated to be held on October 5 and the votes will be counted on 8 October. *—PTI*

LETTERS

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SALAR سالار

How 'dark money' makes its way into US campaigns

Every campaign season brings renewed attention to the amount of money influencing American politics, and who is spending it, and for what purposes. In particular, people are concerned about what is called "dark money." For instance, recent media coverage has pointed to escalating dark money spending on both the Democratic and Republican sides.

The term sounds scary and raises the specter of shadowy people manipulating the nation's politics. As a researcher who studies the American democratic system, I think it's worthwhile to unpack what dark money is, what concerns it raises and what might be done to address it.

Dark money refers to spending to influence elections where the source of the money is not disclosed to the public ***PHOTO: X***

Unidentified political donors

When people talk about dark money, they're usually referring to money spent on elections that comes from sources that cannot be identified.

Federal and state laws impose some limits on contributions and require some political contributions and expenditures to be publicly disclosed. Candidates for federal office, for example, must report their campaign donors to the Federal Election Commission. The FEC makes these reports available to the public.

Likewise, super PACs – groups permitted to spend unlimited amounts on independent electoral advocacy – must also report some information about donations, such as the identities of and amounts given by people who donate more than US$200 in a year.

But campaign finance disclosure laws have gaps.

Federal law, for example, allows certain entities – most notably nonprofits designated as "social welfare" organizations or trade associations under Sections 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(6) of the tax code – to raise and spend large sums on electoral advocacy without disclosing their donors.

Another dark money pathway involves making donations to super PACs through shell companies, which are companies set up for the purpose of hiding the financial activities of other people or groups – in this case, political contributions. Although super PACs are legally required to report who they received the contributions from, if the funds come from shell companies, the super PACs may not know and are not required to disclose where the money actually came from. That information remains hidden from public view.

Undisclosed political expenditures

While discussions of dark money usually focus on where it comes from, the term can also describe a lack of transparency about where it goes.

Under federal law, campaign committees must report their direct disbursements, such as payments to vendors or consultants. These vendors and consultants, however, sometimes function as pass-through entities that receive campaign funds and then purchase undisclosed goods and services. And any of these recipients can be set up as shell companies, making the flow of funds even more difficult to track.

For instance, Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign and the Democratic National Committee faced FEC complaints for failing to disclose indirect payments made through the campaign's law firm to researchers who compiled a dossier on Donald Trump's Russia ties. The Clinton campaign and the DNC paid a fine to settle the matter without conceding wrongdoing.

Stalled federal reforms

Proponents of greater campaign finance transparency have had little success pressing federal lawmakers and regulators to address dark money.

Since 2010, congressional Democrats have been introducing legislation known as the DISCLOSE Act. Among other requirements, it would make dark money groups reveal major donors and restrict the use of shell companies to conceal donors' identities. While versions of the bill have passed the House, they have repeatedly stalled in the Senate. Opponents maintain that these measures would infringe people's privacy rights and chill constitutionally protected speech.

Advocates have also made minimal headway persuading Congress or federal agencies to adopt new disclosure regulations or tighten enforcement.

The FEC, which has an even partisan split among its six commissioners, has often been unable to get a majority to agree to take action. And the FEC's most notable recent decisions have been to loosen, rather than tighten, campaign finance rules. Congress has barred the Securities and Exchange Commission from establishing new political spending disclosure rules for public companies, although some companies self-report more than the law requires.

States' efforts to curb dark money

Dark money is also an issue in state and local elections. Because these elections typically receive less attention and scrutiny than federal elections, money sometimes flows even more opaquely.

Unlike the federal government, a number of states and localities have bolstered their disclosure rules in recent years. Arizona, California, Colorado, New Jersey and Washington, for example, have passed new laws requiring more donor information, including about the original sources of funds that are transferred between multiple groups before being spent on electioneering. States such as Iowa, Massachusetts and Texas have adopted laws requiring campaigns to provide details about how consultants and vendors spend the campaign's funds.

Constitutional questions

Beyond the political challenge of getting stronger transparency regulations adopted, proponents of such measures also face potential constitutional challenges by opponents of disclosure.

In multiple cases, including the 2010 Citizens United v. FEC ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court has rejected First Amendment claims brought by political spenders who wished to conceal their identities. In that case, the court observed that transparency helps the electorate "make informed decisions and give proper weight to different speakers, messages." *—The Conversation*

Why the pandemics? Our impact on the planet has lot do to with it

By Olga Anikeeva, Research Fellow, School of Public Health, University of Adelaide; Jessica Stanhope, Lecturer, School of Allied Health Science and Practice, University of Adelaide; Peng Bi, Professor, School of Public Health, University of Adelaide; and Philip Weinstein, Professorial Research Fellow, School of Public Health, University of Adelaide

Melbourne, 26 September

Pandemics – the global spread of infectious diseases – seem to be making a comeback. In the Middle Ages we had the Black Death (plague), and after the first world war we had the Spanish flu.

Tens of millions of people died from these diseases.

Then science began to get the upper hand, with vaccination eradicating smallpox, and polio nearly so. Antibiotics became available to treat bacterial infections, and more recently antivirals as well.

But in recent years and decades pandemics seem to be returning. In the 1980s we had HIV/AIDS, then several flu pandemics, SARS, and now Covid (no, Covid isn't over).

So why is this happening, and is there anything we can do to avert future pandemics?

Unbalanced ecosystems

Healthy, stable ecosystems provide services that keep us healthy, such as supplying food and clean water, producing oxygen, and making green spaces available for our recreation and wellbeing.

Another key service ecosystems provide is disease regulation. When nature is in balance – with predators controlling herbivore populations, and herbivores controlling plant growth – it's more difficult for pathogens to emerge in a way that causes pandemics.

But when human activities disrupt and unbalance ecosystems – such as by way of climate change and biodiversity loss – things go wrong.

For example, climate change affects the number and distribution of plants and animals. Mosquitoes that carry diseases can move from the tropics into what used to be temperate climates as the planet warms, and may infect more people in the months that are normally disease free.

We've studied the relationship between weather and dengue fever transmission in China, and our findings support the same conclusion reached by many other studies: climate change is likely to put more people at risk of dengue.

At least 10 million people died from multiple pandemics ***PHOTO: ANI***

Biodiversity loss can have similar effects by disrupting food chains. When ranchers cleared forests in South America for their cattle to graze in the first half of the 20th century, tiny forest-dwelling, blood-feeding vampire bats suddenly had a smorgasbord of large sedentary animals to feed on.

While vampire bats had previously been kept in check by the limited availability of food and the presence of predators in the balanced forest ecosystem, numbers of this species exploded in South America.

As urban and agricultural development impinges on natural ecosystems, there are increasing opportunities for humans and domestic animals to become infected with pathogens that would normally only be seen in wildlife – particularly when people hunt and eat animals from the wild.

The HIV virus, for example, first entered human populations from apes that were slaughtered for food in Africa, and then spread globally through travel and trade.

- The planetary health approach has benefit of improving both the health of the environment and human health concurrently

Targeting ultimate causes

Factors such as climate change, biodiversity loss and other global challenges are the ultimate (high level) cause of pandemics. Meanwhile, increased contact between humans, domestic animals and wildlife is the proximate (immediate) cause.

In the case of HIV, while direct contact with the infected blood of apes was the proximate cause, the apes were only being slaughtered because large numbers of very poor people were hungry – an ultimate cause. The distinction between ultimate causes and proximate causes is important, because we often deal only with proximate causes. For example, people may smoke because of stress or social pressure (ultimate causes of getting lung cancer), but it's the toxins in the smoke that cause cancer (proximate cause).

Generally, health services are only concerned with stopping people from smoking – and with treating the illness that results – not with removing the drivers that lead them to smoke in the first place.

A planetary health approach

There's a growing awareness of the importance of adopting a "planetary health" approach to improve human health. This concept is based on the understanding that human health and human civilisation depend on flourishing natural systems, and the wise stewardship of those natural systems. With this approach, ultimate drivers like climate change and biodiversity loss would be prioritised in preventing future pandemics, at the same time as working with experts from many different disciplines to deal with the proximate causes, thereby reducing the risk overall.

We are heartened by the increased uptake of teaching planetary health concepts across the environmental sciences, humanities and health sciences in many universities.

As climate change, biodiversity loss, population displacements, travel and trade continue to increase the risk of disease outbreaks, it's vital that the planetary stewards of the future have a better understanding of how to tackle the ultimate causes that drive pandemic.*—The Conversation*

PHOTO: X/@VOICEQUETTA

Pak: 1 more polio case reported; tally climbs to 22

ISLAMABAD, 26 SEPT

Authorities in Pakistan reported another polio case in Balochistan as the country's tally of the crippling disease cases this year climbed to 22, a setback to the government's efforts to eradicate the virus. The latest victim of the disease was a 30-month-old boy from Pishin in Balochistan, officials said. Officials said the regional reference laboratory for polio eradication at the National Institute of Health on Wednesday confirmed the presence of wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) in the child, bringing the total number of reported cases so far this year to 22, with Balochistan alone accounting for 15 of them. "Sindh has reported four cases while Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Islamabad reported one case each," a lab official said. *—PTI*

Taliban says can't accuse us of gender discrimination

KABUL, 26 SEPT

The Taliban said on Thursday it was absurd to accuse them of gender discrimination and other human rights violations, as four countries vow to hold Afghanistan's rulers accountable under international law for their treatment of women and girls. Australia, Canada, Germany and the Netherlands are set to start legal proceedings against the Taliban for violating a UN convention on women, to which Afghanistan is a party. The countries launched the initiative on Wednesday on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, which is taking place in New York until Monday. Despite promising more moderate rule after they seized power in 2021, the Taliban have barred women and girls from education beyond sixth grade, many public spaces and most jobs. *—AP*

Kamala decries Trump's abortion comments

WASHINGTON, 26 SEPT

Kamala Harris sat for her first solo interview as the Democratic presidential nominee on Wednesday, laying out her plan to boost the middle class and condemning her rival Donald Trump on his comments over abortion. During the interview with MSNBC's Stephanie Ruhle, which was held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the vice-president painted Trump as a candidate focused on the rich at the expense of the middle class, and herself as better equipped to handle the economy. "The top economists in our country have compared our plans and say mine would grow the economy, [and] his would shrink it," she said during the interview. *—PTI*

Japan's longest serving death row inmate is now free

SEOUL, 26 SEPT

A Japanese man who spent almost half a century on death row has been found not guilty of multiple murders, in a closely watched trial that has raised questions about Japan's use of the death penalty. Iwao Hakamada, 88, was sentenced to hang in 1968 after being found guilty of murdering his boss, his wife and their two teenage children, and setting fire to their home two years earlier. The former professional boxer spent 46 years on death row – believed to be the longest time spent on death row of any prisoner worldwide – until he was freed in 2014 when new evidence emerged and a retrial was ordered. Hakamada has consistently protested his innocence and said investigators forced him to confess, while his lawyers alleged police had fabricated evidence. *—The Guardian*

Israel rules out US, French and UK plan for ceasefire

Australia, Italy, Qatar and others call for 21-day ceasefire

TEL AVIV, 26 SEPT

Israel Foreign Minister Israel Katz asserts that "there will be no ceasefire in the north," after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denied claims that a truce is in the cards.

"We will continue to fight the Hezbollah terror group with full force until victory and the return of residents of the north to their homes safely," adds Katz, who is currently standing in for Netanyahu during the latter's US trip but who doesn't appear to have authority to make operational decisions on the prosecution o f the war.

Countries like US, France and other allies jointly called on Wednesday for an immediate 21-day cease-fire to allow for negotiations in the escalating conflict between Israel and Hezbollah that has killed more than 600 people in Lebanon in recent days.

The joint statement, negotiated on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, says the recent fighting is "intolerable and presents an unacceptable risk of a broader regional escalation". "We call for an immediate 21-day ceasefire across the Lebanon-Israel border to provide space for diplomacy," the statement said. "We call on all parties, including the governments of Israel and Lebanon, to endorse the temporary cease-fire immediately."

The conflict between Israel and Hezbollah has killed at least 600 people PHOTO: IDF

> **Israel is violating our sovereignty by sending their warplanes and drones to our skies. They are spreading terror and fear among the Lebanese citizens in full view of the world**
>
> -Najib Mikati, Lebanese Prime Minister

Aprt from that also, Australia, Canada, Qatar, Italy, Japan and UAE have issued a joint statement calling for "a diplomatic settlement" of this crisis.

There was no immediate reaction from the Lebanese side — or Hezbollah — but senior US officials said all parties were aware of the call for a cease-fire. Netanyahu's Office said that the ceasefire put forward from the United States and France was only a proposal and the Prime Minister, who is currently on a flight en route to the United States for the United Nations General Assembly, has not responded to the proposal. "This is a moment of maximum danger. We talk of the risk of full-scale regional war, but the truth is we are already witnessing conflict on multiple fronts," said UK Secretary David Lammy.*—PTI*

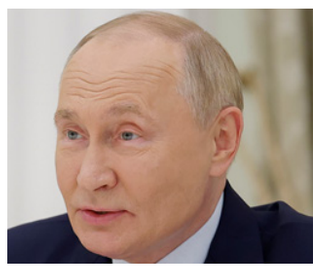
Putin outlines new rules for use of nuclear arsenal

MOSCOW, 26 SEPT

Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned that Russia could respond with nuclear weapons if it were attacked with conventional arms in the latest changes to the country's nuclear doctrine.

In a televised meeting of Russia's Security Council, Putin announced that under the planned revisions, an attack against the country by a non-nuclear power with the "participation or support of a nuclear power" would be seen as a "joint attack on the Russian Federation".

Putin emphasised that Russia could use nuclear weapons in response to a conventional attack that posed a "critical threat to our sovereignty", a vague formulation that leaves broad room for interpretation. The change appears to significantly lower the threshold for Russia to use atomic weapons and comes as Ukraine's Western allies consider whether to allow Kyiv to use longer-range weapons to strike military targets deep inside Russia, and a month after Kyiv launched a surprise incursion into Russia's Kursk region. *—Al Jazeera*



Vladimir Putin PHOTO: PTI

ZELENSKYY'S VISIT WORKED

US announces $8B in military aid for Ukraine

KYIV, 26 SEPT

The United States announced a military aid package for Ukraine worth over $8 billion.

The US plans to announce the new aid package when President Volodymyr Zelensky visits the White House on 26 September, officials said. US President Joe Biden has been working with Congress to extend $5.8 billion in military funding for Ukraine before it expires at the end of September. A second announcement on 26 September will allocate $2.4 billion under the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative.

Biden said the aid also includes a Patriot missile battery and missiles, as well as air-to-ground munitions. The second package will include munitions, anti-drone weapons, and material to support ammunition production in Ukraine, one of the officials told Reuters. The US is also expected to announce a $375 million aid package for Ukraine later on 25 September.

The officials confirmed reports that this package will include a medium-range glide bomb known as the Joint Standoff Weapon. *—The Kyiv Independent*

> **You (Zelenskyy) have a country that has been obliterated, not possible to be rebuilt. It'll take hundreds of years to rebuild it, there's not enough money to rebuild it if the whole world got together. If they made a bad deal, it would have been much better**
>
> -Donald Trump, Former US president

AMID ECONOMIC TURMOIL

At least 25 killed in clashes between Shiites & Sunnis in Pak

Officials said dozens of people from both sides have been wounded since Saturday PHOTO: X

PESHAWAR, 26 SEPT

At least 25 people have been killed in days of clashes between armed Shiites and Sunni Muslims over a lingering land dispute in northwest Pakistan, officials said.

The clashes — which started over the weekend in Kurram, a district in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering Afghanistan — continued on Wednesday. Officials said dozens of people from both sides have been wounded since Saturday. Kurram has been a scene of sectarian violence in recent years. Authorities said they were trying to prevent the land dispute from turning into sectarian violence in the restive northwest, where extremist groups from the two sides have a strong presence. Barrister Saif Ali, a spokesman for the provincial government, said authorities. Shiite Muslims make up about 15 per cent of the 240 million population of Sunni-majority Pakistan, which has a history of sectarian animosity between the two communities. Although both live together largely peacefully in the country, tensions between them have existed for decades in some areas, especially in Kurram, where Shiites dominate in parts of the district. *—PTI*

Pak forces kill 8 militants in border raid

ISLAMABAD, 26 SEPT

Pakistani security forces killed eight militants in an overnight raid in a former stronghold of the Pakistani Taliban in the volatile northwest bordering Afghanistan, the military said Thursday. Troops also seized weapons and ammunition from the insurgents' hideout after an intense shootout in North Waziristan, a district in Khyber province, it said. The military provided no details about the slain militants, including their affiliation. *—AP*

IMF board approves $7B bailout for Pak

ISLAMABAD, 25 SEPT

The International Monetary Fund's board (IMF) on Wednesday approved a USD 7 billion Extended Fund Facility for cash-strapped Pakistan, providing a critical boost to the country's struggling economy. The development was announced by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). The PMO said the premier expressed his satisfaction with the programme's approval. "The implementation of economic reforms is going on rapidly," he said, adding that the government would continue to work hard to achieve goals related to economic development after achieving economic stability. *—PTI*

SUDAN LAUNCHES MAJOR STRIKE TO RETAKE KHARTOUM

KHARTOUM, 26 SEPT

Sudan's army has launched a major offensive in the capital, Khartoum, to regain ground held by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), military sources have told Al Jazeera.

Reporting from Khartoum, Al Jazeera's Hiba Morgan said the army has taken control of three main bridges, including two that connect the city of Omdurman with the capital.

Its forces have "been advancing towards ... the presidential palace where there has also been heavy fighting reported", said Morgan. The army depends mostly on artillery and air strikes and has been unable to dislodge more effective RSF ground forces embedded in Khartoum.

Sudan plunged into conflict in April 2023, when long-simmering tensions between army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and RSF leader Mohamed Hamdan "Hemedti" Dagalo broke out in a conflict that has so far displaced more than 10 million people, a fifth of Sudan's population, both within the country and across borders. *—PTI*

FLORIDA: HURRICANE HELENE THREATENS 'UNSURVIVABLE' STORM SURGE, WINDS

TALLAHASSEE, 26 SEPT

Fast-moving Hurricane Helene was advancing on Thursday across the Gulf of Mexico toward Florida, threatening an "unsurvivable" storm surge in northwestern parts of the state as well as damaging winds, rains and flash floods hundreds of miles inland across much of the southeastern US, forecasters said. Helene is expected to be a major hurricane — meaning a Category 2 or higher — when it makes landfall on Florida's northwestern coast Thursday evening. As of early Thursday, hurricane warnings and flash flood warnings extended far beyond the coast up into south-central Georgia. The governors of Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas have all declared emergencies in their states. The National Weather Service forecast warned they could be particularly "catastrophic and life-threatening" in Florida. *—PTI*

Justin Trudeau survives confidence vote

OTTAWA, 26 SEPT

Justin Trudeau, Canada's prime minister, has easily survived a vote of confidence after his main political rival failed to muster enough support to end nine years of Liberal party rule.

Legislators in the House of Commons voted 211-120 to defeat a motion by the official opposition Conservative party declaring a lack of confidence in Trudeau's minority Liberal government. Trudeau, whose popularity has slumped amid unhappiness over rising prices and a housing crisis, became more politically vulnerable this month when the smaller New Democratic party tore up a 2022 deal to keep him in power until an election scheduled for end-October 2025.

"Today was a good day for the country because I don't think Canadians want an election," said Karina Gould, the senior Liberal in charge of government business in the House.

Trudeau's Liberals will soon face a second vote on one of its budget measures, which is also a matter of confidence, but are expected to also survive that. Officials said the vote could take place on Wednesday or Thursday. *—Courtesy, The Guardian*

Austrian Far-Right looking for historic election win

VIENNA, 26 SEPT

Austria's far-right Freedom Party could win a national election for the first time when Austria votes on Sunday, tapping into voters' anxieties about immigration, inflation, Ukraine and other concerns following recent gains for the hard right elsewhere in Europe.

Herbert Kickl, a former interior minister and longtime campaign strategist who has led the Freedom Party since 2021, wants to become Austria's new chancellor. He has used the term "Volkskanzler", or chancellor of the people, which was used by the Nazis to describe Adolf Hitler in the 1930s. Kickl has rejected the comparison.

Still, Kickl has achieved a turnaround since Austria's last election in 2019. In June, the Freedom Party narrowly won a nationwide vote for the first time in the European Parliament election, which also brought gains for other European far-right parties.

In the 2019 election, its support slumped to 16.2 per cent after a scandal brought down a government in which it was the junior coalition partner. *—AP*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

- Herbert Kickl, a former interior minister and longtime campaign strategist who has led the Freedom Party since 2021, wants to become Austria's new chancellor

UNPREDICTABLE RACE

Who will take charge as Japan PM after Kishida?

TOKYO, 26 SEPT

The governing party of outgoing Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida holds a key vote Friday that will establish a new national leader.

The vote is limited to the long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party's parliamentarians and dues-paying members. Because the party's governing coalition dominates parliament, the winner is assured to be Japan's next prime minister. A record nine lawmakers, including two women, are vying for the job in an unpredictable race.

The winner must quickly regain public trust, or Japan could face a return to a damaging cycle of short-lived governments, experts say.

How does the election work?

The vote is limited to LDP lawmakers and 1.1 million grassroots members.

That's less than 1 per cent of the country's eligible voters. No candidate is expected to win a majority in the first round of voting because of split votes, so the winner will probably be determined in a runoff between the top two vote-getters.

A record nine lawmakers, including two women, are vying for the job in an unpredictable race PHOTO: X/@KISHIDA230

What does the vote mean for Japan?

Experts say this election could mark a return to an era similar to the early 2000s, when "revolving door" leadership changes and political instability ended only with former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe' s eight-year reign. This is because the new leader will lack stable backing by powerful factions.

Who's running?

All nine candidates are incumbent or former Cabinet ministers. Shigeru Ishiba, a former defense minister, has steadily ranked No. 1 in media surveys. Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, the son of a former popular prime minister, Junichiro Koizumi, is behind Ishiba. Economic Security Minister Sanae Takaichi, an Abe protege and staunch conservative who ran against Kishida in 2021, is third by a narrow margin.

A first female PM?

Takaichi and Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa are seeking to become Japan's first female leader. However, is largely in the hands of senior male veterans like former Prime Ministers Taro Aso, Suga and Kishida. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

50 new plants in pipeline for pharmas: Official

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

As many as 50 new greenfield plants are in the pipeline to come up in the next two years under the Production-linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for pharma and medical devices manufacturing, a senior government official said on Thursday. Speaking at the Annual Pharma Summit organised by industry body Assocham, Department of Pharmaceuticals Secretary Arunish Chawla said as the 'Make in India' initiative completes ten years, already 50 plants have been set up under the PLI schemes for the two sectors. When asked on the sidelines of the summit when the 50 new greenfield plants will come up, he said, "Everything will be completed in the next two years." Elaborating on the success of the PLI schemes, Chawla said, "In the last two years alone, the PLI plants have catalysed 10 billion (dollars) worth of exports from India to the highest the most regulated destinations across the planet Earth." Last year more than 50 per cent of drug and pharma produced in the country was exported, he said. *—PTI*

Rupee drops 6P to close at 83.64 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 26 SEPT

The rupee depreciated by 6 paise to settle at 83.64 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, dragged by sustained foreign fund outflows. However, a decline in global crude prices and a firm trend in domestic equities restricted the rupee losses, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the local unit opened slightly weak at 83.66 against the American currency. During the session, it dropped 13 paise to touch 83.71. However, the local unit recovered some lost ground to settle at 83.64, a decline of 6 paise against its previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee closed at 83.58 against the American currency. On the domestic equity markets front, the Sensex climbed 666.25 points to settle at an all-time high of 85,836.12, while Nifty rallied 211.90 points to hit a record of 26,216.05. *—PTI*

GST panel to meet on 19 Oct over life, health insurance

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

The ministerial panel to decide on lowering goods and services tax (GST) on health and life insurance premiums will have its first meeting on 19 October, officials said. Currently, 18 per cent GST is levied on insurance premiums and there have been demands to either exempt or reduce the tax. The GST Council in its meeting earlier this month decided to set up a 13-member GoM to decide on tax on health and life insurance premiums. Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary is the convenor of the GoM. The GoM has been mandated to submit its report to the Council by October-end. A final call by the council on taxation of insurance premiums is likely to be taken in the next meeting in November, based on the GoM report. *—PTI*

Dr Reddy's fined Rs 28 lakh in Mexico

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

Dr Reddy's Laboratories on Thursday said the Mexican drug regulator has imposed a penalty of around Rs 28 lakh.The drug regulatory body of Mexico has imposed a penalty of MXN 6,51,420 (Rs 28 Lakh) on the company for deviation from prescribed guidelines for filing intimation of import of a reference standard for one of the active pharmaceutical ingredients, the Hyderabad-based drug major said in a regulatory filing. *—PTI*

You've ₹15K cr dues, why only pay BCCI: SC to Byju's

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its verdict on a plea of a US firm against the NCLAT order stopping insolvency proceedings against ed-tech firm Byju's.

Supreme Court questioned why crisis-hit ed-tech major Byju's chose to settle its dues only with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) despite being in Rs 15,000 crore debt.

A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud asked the insolvency resolution professional (IRP) to maintain status quo till the apex court delivers its judgement in the matter.

The bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, considered the plea of US firm Glas Trust Company LLC and asked the IRP not to proceed with the committee of creditor's meeting to deal with the Byju's case.

While hearing the matter on Wednesday, the top court had questioned the verdict of insolvency appellate tribunal NCLAT setting aside the insolvency proceedings against Byju's and approving its Rs 158.9 crore dues settlement with the BCCI.

Observing that the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) did not apply its mind while closing the insolvency proceedings against the ed-tech major, the bench had hinted that it may send back the dispute for fresh adjudication.

The NCLAT, on 2 August, granted relief to the embattled ed-tech firm by setting aside the insolvency proceedings against it after approving its Rs 158.9 crore dues settlement with BCCI.

The verdict had come as a huge relief for Byju's as it had effectively put its founder Byju Raveendran back in control.

However, the relief remained short-lived as the top court, on 14 August, termed the NCLAT verdict as "unconscionable" and stayed its operation while issuing notices to Byju's and others on the appeal of the ed-tech firm's US-based creditor Glas Trust Company LLC against the judgment of the insolvency appellate tribunal. *—PTI*

The bench asked the insolvency resolution professional to maintain status quo till the court delivers its judgement in the matter **PHOTO: PTI**

Sensex jumps 666 pts to record high; Nifty at 26,200

257 stocks hit 52-wk high while 46 firms touched 52-wk low

MUMBAI, 26 SEPT

Benchmark Sensex rallied 666 points to close at a fresh record high on Thursday following buying in auto and banking shares amid gains in global markets.

The BSE Sensex jumped 666.25 points or 0.78 per cent to settle at a record high of 85,836.12 amid monthly expiry in the derivatives segment. As many as 28 Sensex stocks advanced and two declined.

During the day, it reached a record intra-day peak of 85,930.43, surging 760.56 points or 0.89 per cent. The benchmark is just 69.57 points away from the 86,000-peak.

Rallying for the sixth day in a row, the NSE Nifty climbed 211.90 points or 0.81 per cent to close at a record high of 26,216.05. During the day, it soared 246.75 points or 0.94 per cent to hit a fresh intra-day lifetime peak of 26,250.90.

From the 30 Sensex firms, Maruti jumped nearly 5 per cent. Tata Motors, Bajaj Finserv, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Steel, JSW Steel, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finance and Nestle were the other big gainers.

Larsen & Toubro and NTPC were the laggards.

"China's recent economic stimulus announcement has greatly enhanced investor confidence, resulting in significant positive momentum in global markets, especially within Asian indices. Moreover, the market is maintaining an optimistic outlook in response to stable US economic data," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

Shares of ITC rose around 1 per cent and hit a record high of Rs 522.45, taking its market capitalisation past Rs 6.5 lakh crore mark **PHOTO: PTI**

Concurrently, the Indian market is reaching new highs, anticipating a strong recovery in corporate earnings for the H2FY25, fuelled by expected government expenditure, Nair added.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.39 per cent while midcap index ended flat, marginally down 0.01 per cent.

Among the indices, auto jumped 2.23 per cent, metal (2.08 per cent), commodities (1.32 per cent), FMCG (0.84 per cent),

consumer discretionary (0.75 per cent) and services (0.64 per cent).

Industrials, telecommunication and utilities were the laggards.

As many as 257 stocks hit their 52-week high levels while 46 firms declined to their 52-week lows.

Shares of ITC rose around 1 per cent and hit a record high of Rs 522.45 , taking its market capitalisation past the Rs 6.5 lakh crore mark for the first time ever. *—PTI*

India's infra doing good but mfg sector needs boost: Ex-RBI guv

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

India has done well in areas like infrastructure in the last 10 years, but it also needs to do more in other sectors to boost local manufacturing and job creation, former Reserve Bank of India Governor Raghuram Rajan said on Thursday.

Rajan further said the government's focus on production, whether it is goods or services is a good thing, but it is also important to do it the right way.

Responding to a question on the Modi government's flagship initiative 'Make in India', he said, "I would say the intention is good. I think in some areas, we have done a lot, as I said, in infrastructure...we have done a lot that has been very useful".

Raghuram Rajan **PHOTO: PTI**

The Modi government's flagship initiative 'Make in India' was launched 10 years ago on 25 September, 2014.

Under the 'Make in India' initiatives a series of measures have been taken by the government to boost local manufacturing and exports.

These initiatives include the rollout of production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes for 14 sectors, ease of foreign direct investment (FDI) norms, reduction of compliance burden, single window approval system, and the national logistics policy.

Currently, the size of Germany's economy is about USD 4.5 trillion and Japan about USD 4.2 trillion. The size of India's economy is USD 3.7 trillion at present.

Asked what reforms measures Modi 3.0 government must take in its third term, Rajan said the single biggest reform that the government needs to undertake is to focus on education. *—PTI*

BCCL BOOKS 2.4 MT COKING COAL FOR STEEL SECTOR

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

The government on Thursday said 2.40 million tonnes (MT) of coking coal have been booked of the 3.36 MT offered by Coal India arm Bharat Coking Coal Ltd (BCCL) under auction mode for the steel sector for long-term linkages.

Coking coal is a key raw material that is used to manufacture steel through the blast furnace route.

The import of coking coal puts a burden on country's valuable foreign reserve, and to change this, BCCL has undertaken reforms to make its coking coal auction processes more flexible, transparent, and attractive for the country's steel producers. *—PTI*

B'luru sees highest office leasing at 6.3M sqft

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

Demand for office space continues to be strong with gross leasing rising 31 per cent in July-September quarter across six major cities, according to Colliers India.

Bengaluru and Hyderabad accounted for over half of the leasing activity during this period.

Bengaluru registered its highest-ever leasing in any quarter at 6.3 million sq ft, up 85 per cent from 3.4 million square feet in the year-ago period.

Real estate consultant Colliers India data showed that the gross office leasing rose to 17.3 million square feet in July-September from 13.2 million square feet in the year-ago period.

Office space leasing in Mumbai and Chennai remained flat at 1.7 million square feet and 1.4 million square feet, respectively.

Hyderabad witnessed a 16 per cent increase to 2.9 million square feet from 2.5 million square feet.

Office demand in Delhi-NCR fell 25 per cent to 2.4 million square feet in July-September 2024 from 3.2 million square feet in the corresponding period of the previous year.

Gross absorption does not include lease renewals, pre-commitments and deals where only a letter of intent has been signed. Office space demand in Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Mumbai have reached close to or surpassed 2023 demand levels in the first three quarters of 2024 itself, he added. *—PTI*

PHOTO: SALAR

Housing sales in B'luru dip by 8% in July-Sept: Anarock

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

Housing sales fell 11 per cent during July-September to 1.07 lakh units in seven major cities on lower launches and an annual 23 per cent growth in average prices, according to Anarock.

It also said that In Bengaluru, housing sales decreased 8 per cent to 15,025 units from 16,395 units.

Real estate consultant Anarock on Thursday released data that showed an 11 per cent fall in sales of residential properties in July-September to 1,07,060 units from 1,20,290 units in the year-ago period.

Anarock Chairman Anuj Puri said, "All the top cities individually recorded a dip in housing sales."

The top 7 cities witnessed a drop of 19 per cent in new housing supply, with 93,750 units launched in July-September 2024 against 1,16,220 units in the corresponding period in 2023.

As per the data, Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) recorded the highest sales among the top 7 cities in the July-September quarter at 36,190 units, a 6 per cent drop from 38,505 units in the year-ago period.

Housing sales in Delhi-NCR fell 2 per cent to 15,570 units from 15,865 units.

Hyderabad recorded sales of 12,735 units, a 22 per cent fall from 16,375 units in the third quarter of 2023 calendar year.

Among the top 7 cities, Hyderabad saw the highest 32 per cent jump in average prices. *—PTI*

IN INDIA

EV industry not relevant without incentives: Report

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

The journey of shifting to electric mobility is not going to be easy for automakers as it is tough to generate profitable margins and get scale in the electric vehicles (EVs) segment, says a research report by Bernstein.

The report noted that generating sufficient margins and scaling up in the EV space is difficult, even with significant financial incentives. It added that many traditional automakers are facing losses, and only a few are expected to remain competitive in the long run.

The report suggested that while niche startups may survive, their long-term market share is likely to remain limited. It noted that instead, the competition in the EV space will primarily be between established OEMs.

As per Bernstein, among India's leading two-wheeler manufacturers, Bajaj Auto and TVS Motors are on a similar footing in the EV sector, while Hero MotoCorp lags behind. Eicher Motors, which is expected to launch its electric vehicles soon, is predicted to be sub-scale and less relevant in the market. Bernstein rates Bajaj Auto with an "Outperform" rating due to its lower valuations, while TVS, Hero, and Eicher are rated as "Market Perform."

The report also highlighted that Ola Electric (Ola-E), one of the startups in the EV two-wheeler space, has managed to generate positive operating earnings (EBITDA) from its premium models like the S1 Pro and S1 Air. However, it is incurring losses on its mass-market model, the S1X. *—ANI*

Ola Electric plans to have 10K outlets

Ola Electric on Thursday said it will establish 10,000 sales and service outlets by the end of 2025 to expand its reach across smaller cities and towns. The electric two-wheeler maker said it has initiated a network partner programme aimed at taking the EV revolution further into tier-2 and tier-3 cities, including urban pockets where EV penetration still remains low. Under the initiative, the company has on-boarded 625 partners. *—PTI*

Gold hits record high of ₹78K on strong global cues

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

Gold prices on Thursday jumped by Rs 400 to breach a record Rs 78,000 per 10 gram level in the national capital on sustained buying by jewellers as well as strong trends in global markets.

Maintaining its record-breaking run for the second day, gold spurted by Rs 400 to a fresh lifetime high of Rs 78,250 per 10 grams, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal had closed at Rs 77,850 per 10 grams on Wednesday.

Silver also soared by Rs 1,000 to Rs 94,000 per kg on robust demand from industrial units and coin makers amid strong overseas trend.

The metal had finished at Rs 93,000 per kg in the previous session.

In addition, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also hit a fresh high of Rs 77,900 per 10 grams. On Wednesday, the yellow metal had ended at Rs 77,500 per 10 grams.

Traders said a rise in local demand, coupled with robust global trend supported gold prices.

Meanwhile, in the futures trade, gold contracts for October delivery rose Rs 162 or 0.22 per cent to trade at Rs 75,475 per 10 grams on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX).

Silver contracts for December delivery surged Rs 1,034 or 1.12 per cent to Rs 93,079 per kilogram on the bourse.

On the other hand, COMEX gold rose 0.61 per cent to USD 2,701.20 per ounce in the international markets.

"The eased monetary policy of major Western central bankers and growing concerns about the escalating Middle East war have driven the recent uptrend in gold," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. *—PTI*

ALTMAN GETS 7% EQUITY

Trouble brews as another OpenAI Exec quits

SAN FRANCISCO, 26 SEPT

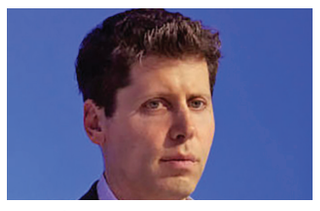
A high-ranking executive at OpenAI who served a few days as its interim CEO during a period of turmoil last year said she's leaving the artificial intelligence company.

Mira Murati, OpenAI's chief technology officer, said in a written statement Wednesday that after much reflection she has "made the difficult decision to leave OpenAI".

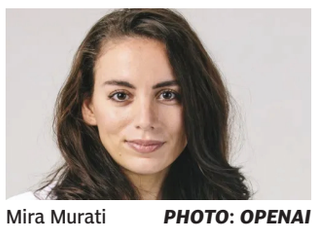
Mira Murati's departure follows those of co-founders Greg Brockman (on extended leave) and John Schulman (joined rival Anthropic), as well as a product team leader and former Meta employee.

The shakeup comes as OpenAI is working on a plan to restructure its core business into a for-profit benefit corporation that its non-profit board will no longer control

Chief Executive Sam Altman will also receive 7 per cent equity for the first time in the for-profit company, which could be worth $150 billion after the restructuring as it also tries to remove the cap on returns for investors.



Sam Altman **PHOTO: X/@PUBITY**



Mira Murati **PHOTO: OPENAI**

Tesla owner Elon Musk, who was among the founders of the artificial intelligence (AI) startup in 2015, took to X, to snub the firm saying, "You can't just convert a non-profit into a for-profit. That is illegal."

The tech giant has been in a state of influx as it loses multiple managers and shifts the structure of some of its teams.

- CEO Sam Altman will also receive 7 per cent equity for the first time in the for-profit company, which could be worth $150 billion.

Murati was suddenly catapulted to be the company's interim CEO late last year after the board of directors fired Altman, sparking upheaval in the AI industry. The company later brought in another interim CEO before restoring Altman to his leadership role and replacing most of the board members who ousted him. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: PTI

Pant is a ripping bloke, wish he was Australian: Marsh

MUMBAI, 26 SEPT

R Rishabh Pant's stirring comeback to cricket has moved Mitchell Marsh so much that the all-rounder termed him a "ripping bloke" whom he wished to have played for Australia. After returning to international cricket earlier this year through white-ball formats, Pant underlined his long-term readiness for red-ball cricket with a hundred against Bangladesh in the recent first Test at Chennai. Talking about Pant's comeback from that horrific car accident in 2022, Marsh was in awe of the Indian wicket-keeper batter's positiveness, competitiveness, and hunger to win. "He's a ripping bloke. I wish he was Australian.—*PTI*

Theegala is first Indian American in President's Cup

MONTREAL, 26 SEP

Sahith Theegala is set to become the first American of Indian origin to tee off at the President's Cup this week and he is thrilled about the opportunity. "It's pretty wild. I don't think this is what my dad had envisioned when he came over to the U.S. from India," he said."But it means the world. I know my dad is super thankful for the country and the opportunity it's given him. At the same time, he also took that opportunity. That opportunity has led to my opportunity," he added.Reflecting on the significance of representing his country, Theegala said: "...just to play for your country and wear your colors and represent means the world."It fires me up a lot to see other guys on the team who want it so bad and be so meaningful to them... There's no bigger event than when you play for your country."—*PTI*

China Open: Sinner survives scare in Beijing

BEIJING, 26 SEPT

Top-ranked Jannik Sinner overcame a scare from Nicolas Jarry to begin his defence of the China Open title with a 4-6, 6-3, 6-1 first-round victory on Thursday.The Italian extended his win streak to 12 after titles at Cincinnati and the US Open, his second Grand Slam title this year. Sinner's record over the past 52 weeks stands at 76-6.Jarry won their only previous match on grass in 2019 at 's-Hertogenbosch and the Chilean overpowered Sinner in the first set in Beijing with 11 winners."In the first set, I was struggling to return his serve and he broke me," Sinner said. "I just tried to stay there mentally."The first round at any tournament is never easy and playing against him is very tough. But, I am happy about the performance and how I ended the match."—*PTI*

Youth ODI: India Colts beat Australia by 7 runs

PUDUCHERRY, 26 SEPT

India U-19 boys held their nerve in the final overs to eke out a seven-run victory over Australia in a high-scoring third youth ODI, completing a 3-0 series sweep on Thursday. The Indian junior team had won the first and second Youth ODIs by seven and nine wickets respectively. Batting first, India scored 324 for 8 riding on half-centuries from opener Rudra Patel (77 off 81 balls) and skipper Mohamed Amaan (71 off 72 balls). There were useful contributions from lower-order hitters like Hardik Raj (30 off 18 balls) and Chetan Sharma (18 not out off 9 balls) which took the team to a commanding position. In reply, Australia was going strong at 241 for 2 in the 41st over with twin centurions skipper Oliver Peake (111)—*PTI*

INDIA VS BANGLADESH 2ND TEST

India likely to maintain supremacy over neighbours

Rain is predicted on the opening day as well as on day three

KANPUR, 26 SEPT

Ground staff cover the ground during rains ahead of the 2nd test match between India and Bangladesh at the Green Park stadium PHOTO: PTI

India would want their big guns Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma to fire when the mighty hosts aim for a clean sweep against a beleaguered Bangladesh in the second and final Test starting here on Friday.

The all-round show of Ravichandran Ashwin, Shubman Gill's sublime hundred, Ravindra Jadeja's quality batting and Rishabh Pant's roaring comeback allowed India to script a comfortable victory in Chennai despite being put under pressure by the Bangladesh pacers on day one.

The way India bounced back in the game reaffirmed their supremacy in Test cricket, especially at home where they are on course for a record-extending 18th consecutive series win.

However, both Rohit and Virat's bats remained silent in the series opener as Bangladesh pacers Hasan Mahmud and Taskin Ahmed bowled probing lines on a supportive track and were rewarded.

On the other hand, Bangladesh, who failed to apply themselves with the bat in the series opener, are expected to make changes to their playing eleven. They struggled against a high-quality Indian pace attack in their first essay in Chennai and then could not handle Ashwin and Co while chasing an improbable target.

Bangladesh can bring left-arm spinner Taijul Islam in place of lanky pacer Nahid Rana. They also have an option in off-spinner Nayeem Hasan. The muggy weather will pose a huge challenge for the players. The humidity has been very high in the city in the last few days. The Indian team made Thursday's practice optional, saying it needed to save players from searing heat.

The match may see interruptions on the first and third day with weather forecasts predicting rain.

India has not lost a Test to Bangladesh to date and the visitors will need a special effort to reverse that statistic.

Conditions and pitch will dictate India's playing XI: Abhishek Nayar

India remains undecided on playing three spinners in the second Test against Bangladesh with assistant coach Abhishek Nayar saying that the nature of the pitch and overhead conditions on the morning of the match will influence the decision-making.

Uttar Pradesh Cricket Association has prepared two pitches for the game beginning here on Thursday.

Skipper Rohit Sharma and coach Gautam Gambhir had a look at the two pitches during the optional training session on the eve of the match at Green Park Stadium.

The match starts at 9.30 AM IST. —*PTI*

Shakib Al Hasan retires from T20Is

Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan addresses a press conference ahead of the 2nd cricket Test PHOTO: PTI

KANPUR, 26 SEPT

Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan on Thursday announced his retirement from T20 Internationals with immediate effect and also said that the second Test against India will be his last if his country's board doesn't give him a farewell match at home.

The 37-year-old great, who featured in 129 T20Is for Bangladesh will, however, continue to play in franchise leagues."I have played my last T20 match in T20 World Cup. We have discussed this with the selectors.

Looking at the 2026 World Cup, this is the right time for me to move out. Hopefully, BCB will find some great players and we will perform well," said Shakib on the eve of the second and final Test against India here.

Shakib has played 69 Tests, scoring 4453 runs and taking 242 wickets." I have expressed my desire to play my last Test in Mirpur to BCB.

They agreed with me. They are trying to organize everything so that I can go to Bangladesh."If that won't happen, the match against India in Kanpur would be my last in Test cricket," he added.

Shakib was named as an accused in a murder case back home during the political unrest that led to the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He was a member of Parliament from her party, the Awami League. —*PTI*

Chandimal, Mathews punish sloppy NZ

GALLE, 26 SEPT

Dinesh Chandimal PHOTO: PTI

A trademark and enterprising century from Dinesh Chandimal led Sri Lanka's charge towards a big score after winning the toss, making New Zealand rue multiple lapses in the field on the opening day in Galle. Chandimal's 16th Test century saw him switch gears across the first two sessions to help the hosts finish on a commanding 306 for 3, helped by unbeaten half-centuries from Angelo Mathews and Kamindu Mendis. New Zealand could have picked more than three wickets in the day had Daryl Mitchell not put down two catches at first slip, Tom Blundell not missed Dimuth Karunartne's stumping, and William O'Rourke not overstepped when he had Mathews caught behind. It was Chandimal's chanceless innings, however, that hurt the visitors the most. He continued his fine form by raising his sixth hundred in Galle and his fourth 50-plus score in eight Test innings while batting at No. 3, out of his usual position in the middle order, to accommodate the younger batters Kamindu at No. 5 and Kusal Mendis at No. 7.

The only thing that went New Zealand's way was the early wicket of Pathum Nissanka. Sri Lanka 306 for 3 (Chandimal 116, Mathews 78*, Kamindu 51*, Phillips 1-33) vs New Zealand. —*PTI*

Ridhima tied for lead in 13th Leg of WPG Tour

GURUGRAM, 26 SEPT

Jasmine Shekar faltered in the second round but kept a share of the lead with the steady Ridhima Dilawari in the 13th Leg of the Women's Pro Golf Tour here on Thursday.

While Jasmine shot 76, Ridhima carded 73 with a bogey and 17 pars here at the Golden Greens Golf Club.

They were 2-under 142 each and a shot clear of Sneha Singh (73-70) and Amandeep Drall (72-71) at 1-under 143.

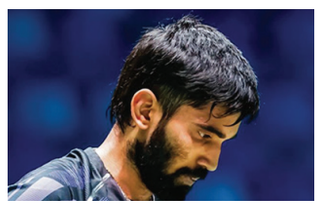
Amateur Anvvi Dahhiya (73-71) and Order of Merit leader Hitaashee Bakshi (71-73) were tied for fifth place at even 144.

Jasmine, looking for her opening win after two runner-up finishes over the last 18 months, had just a birdie against three bogeys and a double bogey on the Par-4 sixth hole. —*PTI*

MACAU OPEN

Srikanth, Treesa & Gayatri enter q/fs

MACAU, 26 SEPT



Star Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth PHOTO: PTI

Star Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth advanced to the men's singles quarterfinals of the Macau Open Super 300 badminton tournament with a straight-game victory over compatriot Ayush Shetty in the second round here on Thursday.

Seeded sixth, Srikanth, who is playing his first competition since recovering from an injury sustained in May, outclassed 2023 Odisha masters runner-up Ayush 21-13, 21-18 to emerge as the lone Indian competitor in the singles event. Srikanth, the 2021 World Championship silver medallist, will next face Hong Kong's second seed Ng Ka Long Angus, with whom he shares an even 4-4 head-to-head record in their last eight encounters. In women's doubles, the pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand also reached the quarterfinals, securing a solid 22-20, 21-11 win over Chinese Taipei's Lin Chih-Chun and Teng Chun Hsun in just 38 minutes.

Tasnim Mir put up a commendable fight against fourth seed and 2022 World junior champion Tomoka Miyazaki from Japan. —*PTI*

Pranavi and Tvesa PHOTO: PTI

Pranavi and Tvesa are all set for Open de France golf

DEAUVILLE, 26 SEPT

Fresh from a Top-10 finish at the La Sella Open, Pranavi Urs will spearhead the Indian challenge, joined by Tvesa Malik at the Lacoste Ladies Open de France here.

The 54-hole tournament with a purse of euros 375,000 will see the Top-60 make the cut after 36 holes and play the weekend.

The Indian girls had cut last week. A total of 96 players from 29 nations will tee up at the Diane Barrière course at Golf Barrière.

Pranavi had a stunning six-under 66, her career-best round on the Ladies European Tour while finishing seventh. Tvesa finished T-57 after four rounds.

Pranavi is 24th on the Order of Merit, while Tvesa, making a comeback, is 47th. The top Indian is Diksha Dagar at 18 and she is taking a two-week break.

Multiple winner on the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour, Pranavi is playing with Emma Spitz of Austria and Pauline Roussin-Bouchard of France, who is having a good season.

Tvesa, also a winner on Hero WPGT, will go out with Sara Byrne of Ireland and Lily Humphrey Mays of England. They are both in the afternoon session.

Sweden's Johanna Gustavsson returns to defend her Lacoste Ladies Open de France crown. —*PTI*

It's about giving honest feedback: Aiden

BENGALURU, 26 SEPT

Aiden Markram PHOTO: PTI

Saddled with the responsibility of taking South Africa into the future, their T20I captain Aiden Markram on Thursday said he has prioritized molding young players into long-term prospects for the country.

The 29-year-old was appointed the skipper ahead of the T20 World Cup, which ended in a title-round defeat to India in June before losing to the West Indies in a three-match away series in August.

But the tough start has not deterred him, and he is excited about the new crop of South African cricketers.

"It's to support them, help them at training, or wherever they feel they need help," Markram told select media persons in an interaction facilitated by FanCode, the official digital partner of the upcoming South Africa vs Ireland series.

"I've been fortunate enough to have played a few games and have a little bit more experience than some of the younger guys.

"So, it's about them asking some really good questions and me giving some honest feedback to them, maybe trying to assist them in what they can expect out there in the middle, the approach from different oppositions, etc.

"So, it's all just to help them grow as players, whether you can make a 1 percent difference or a bigger difference. It all benefits the team at the end," he elaborated.

South Africa has different captains in white-ball formats with Temba Bavuma leading the ODI side. But Markram doesn't see working with only the T20I group as a hindrance. —*PTI*

Chess is a happy accident for me: GM Vidit Gujrathi

NEW DELHI, 26 SEPT

Vidit Gujrathi PHOTO: PTI

Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi was just another Indian kid who dreamt of becoming a cricketer in his childhood before an accidental initiation to chess, which he feels was a "very happy accident".

Gujrathi was part of the five-member Indian men's team that won a historic gold in the open category of the recent Olympiad in Budapest. To make the achievement more memorable, the Indian women's team also bagged the gold, making it a double celebration for the country.

"It was accidental. I was six years old and I was very mischievous as a child. My parents wanted to engage me in some activity. I used to play cricket like every Indian kid," Gujrathi told. "He took me to a club and their cricket was played with season ball, so my Dad said to me wait for a year and then play cricket. —*PTI*

YOUNGEST-EVER ARSENAL STARTER

Porter sets unique new record against Bolton

GEORGETOWN, 22 AUG

Arsenal's teenage goalkeeper Jack Porter PHOTO: @JACKPORTERINC

Arsenal's teenage goalkeeper Jack Porter set a unique new record during the Gunners' Carabao Cup victory over Bolton Wanderers.

Hale End starlet Ethan Nwaneri stole the headlines by claiming a brace as the Gunners dispatched Bolton 5-1 on Wednesday, while Raheem Sterling also netted on his full debut.

Nwaneri and Sterling were among five full debutants for Arsenal, with academy graduates Porter, Josh Nichols, and Myles Lewis-Skelly also claiming their first start for Mikel Arteta's side.

Indeed, Porter, 16, became the youngest goalkeeper in Arsenal history. Moreover, by wearing the No.92 shirt the teenager set a new record for the highest number to appear in a competitive first-team game for Arsenal, beating that of Bukayo Saka, who once donned 87.

Speaking after Porter's record-breaking appearance, Arteta said: "We told him yesterday and I think straight away he spoke to his family.

"They weren't prepared for that, it's a big step, it's a big occasion for them. I think they were nervous about it but he reacted well.

"He was composed in training and today as well. His teammates helped him as well on that. One experience, and what a way to break a record."

Elsewhere, Arteta heaped praise on 17-year-old Nwaneri.

Arteta said: "The second [goal], I was happy for him because he scored, and I know [what] the reaction of his team-mates [would be] if he didn't! "Overall again, he was really good - a really strong performance for him. He feels part of us. You can tell that he plays with confidence and belief that he knows what to do on the pitch.

"It's another step. He's ahead of what anyone could expect. Since he joined the first team, he's always ahead of what we expected, of what I expected. He deserves that, he is part of us and he will have the minutes." —*AP*

Robert helps La Liga leaders past Getafe

LONDON, 26 SEPT

Lewandowski PHOTO: @_RL9

Robert Lewandowski continued his fine form and earned La Liga leaders Barcelona a 1-0 win over Getafe on Wednesday. The Polish forward struck from close range in the first half to maintain Barca's 100 percent record in the league so far this season with their seventh victory. Barcelona dominated despite not being able to add to their lead and restored a four-point advantage over Real Madrid, who beat Alaves on Tuesday.

"You can't always win by a lot of goals," defender Jules Kounde told Movistar.

"The important thing is we made a lot of chances again and took the three points... Getafe is always a tough team to handle." Coach Hansi Flick started Inaki Pena in goal for the stricken Marc-Andre ter Stegen, who was out for months with a severe knee injury and brought Marc Casado and Alejandro Balde back into the side.

The reserve goalkeeper, who conceded 32 times in 17 matches across all competitions last season, heard his name chanted supportively by fans behind his goal and saved an early header from Carles Perez. —*AP*